

HOLD THE FORT.

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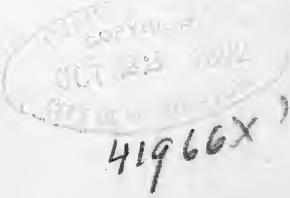
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

HOLD THE FORT:


A BOOK FOR THE YOUNG.


BY REV. A. HOUTZ, A. M.

READING, PA.:
DANIEL MILLER, PUBLISHER.
1892.



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INTRODUCTION.

In launching this little bark on the literary sea, we cannot with any degree of certainty predict its destiny. It has not the reputation of an established and renowned author to secure it a safe and successful voyage. It must go upon its own merits. We hope, however, that the reader will be gentle in his criticisms, and seek its merits rather than its demerits. We do not claim perfection for it. Like its author as well as its reader, it may have its imperfections.

Who does not enjoy a visit from a grandfather? There is something grand in his silvery locks, in his seriousness, and in his rich experience. How pleasant it is to have him entertain the family, and especially the children, with his narrations of the past. Having lived through the late civil war, he recollects its stirring events, and can recall them at will. One incident, that of "Holding the Fort," he recalls with pleasure, and makes it the theme of several interesting evening talks. While he does not anticipate another civil war soon, he knows from experience that many conflicts await the young; that in the moral and religious world there are many strongholds to be defended against the power of sin and satan; that every individual who is on the side of right and truth, will have hand to hand conflicts with the enemy.

Moral and religious principles are great things. They are the strongholds of Christ's kingdom. Sa-

tan and his emissaries are trying to overthrow them. Christ calls upon all His followers to defend and maintain them—to hold the fort.

In this little book the buoyant youth who thinks not of danger, who is unconscious of the delusive paths of vice, and who suspects not the subtilty of the wicked one, is put on his guard and urged to vigilance. Here the professed soldier of the cross, whose hands tremble and whose knees shake, is encouraged and exhorted to firmness and faithfulness. Here the child of affliction is taught the true significance of suffering, and is exhorted to patience and resignation to God's will, having the promise, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." 2 Tim. 2 : 12.

If this little volume should be the means of leading the youth to realize more fully his danger and to take a more positive stand on the side of right and truth, of leading the faltering Christian to brace up and meet with courage and faith the issues of life, and of leading the child of affliction to realize that God is gracious and sympathetic, and will soon exchange the bitter cup for the cup of heavenly nectar, then we shall feel that this book has accomplished a mission worthy of its existence. Believing that a kind Providence will attend its journeyings, we now send it forth into the wide world, hoping it will have access to many homes and the patronage of many readers.

THE AUTHOR.

ORANGEVILLE, PA.

DEDICATION.

To the glory of Christ, our Lord,
I this little book award;
He is the Way, the Truth, the Life;
Our great Captain in the strife.

Next, I dedicate it to those
Who me their shepherd chose,
Who, in the use of holy rites,
Seek the smiling face of Light.

Then in order, I counsel give
To those who in wedlock live,
Who at the altar's sacred shrine
Vowed their marriage contract signed.

Last, I address with pious thoughts
Those who with trials are wrought.
To them words of cheer I would speak,
That they, too, vict'ry may reap.

A. H.

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CHAPTER I.

Hold the Fort.

In an humble village home there lived a happy family consisting of the parents and four children. The names and ages of these children were respectively as follows : Amy, six years ; David, eight ; Charity, eleven, and Walter, fourteen. The father was a sober and industrious man ; and, although in very moderate circumstances, he made a comfortable living for his family. His children, like many others of their age, were at times a little boisterous and contentious. But it was easy for them to settle down and listen with patience to their grandfather who came to stay a few days with them. He was very fond of his grandchildren, and had the rare faculty of entertaining them with interesting and instructive stories. This

chapter introduces a talk which he gave them on the subject of "Hold the Fort," and which is as follows :

You remember, children, that there is a song found in some of our Sunday school singing books called " Hold the Fort." This song at one time was very popular, and children generally loved to sing it. Its tune was inspiring and much more so its sentiment. But while that song may have worn out, the principle which it illustrated will not cease to exist. It is to inculcate that principle into your tender minds that I have selected this topic for my conversation, which I hope will be both interesting and profitable to you all. The expression " Hold the Fort" originated in this way : During the late civil war a garrison was occupying a fort which protected a very important place. The enemy made an attack upon this fort and endeavored to capture it. The contest was between a faithful few within the fort and a superior number of the enemy without. It was feared that

the enemy would overpower the garrison and compel it to surrender. The attack on the fort being anticipated, a detachment of soldiers was sent to reinforce it. This assistance was very timely, perhaps saved the fort. Coming in sight at the most critical moment, its commander took in the situation and signaled, "Hold the fort," and then hastened to the rescue. The prospect of help renewed the courage of that devoted little band. Inspired with new hope, it shouted and resisted with renewed courage the attacks of the enemy. Soon the relief arrived and further efforts of the enemy to capture the fort were useless. You may well imagine the joy this timely help awakened in the hearts of those brave defenders of that fort. The message that was signaled to them revived their dying hope, and, like magic, inspired their souls with courage. They held the fort and were crowned the victors of that conflict.

"Grandpa," said David, "were there any boys among those brave defenders of that fort?"

I think not. The government did not often enlist boys in the army. Occasionally a drummer boy was admitted, but the army was composed of able-bodied men. Many were young men, even as young as eighteen years.

"I would like to be a soldier in some fort where I would have nothing to do but shoot out at the enemy when he advances to make an attack. I would give him a better brushing than Gen. Jackson gave the enemy that moved against his breastworks of cotton bales at New Orleans," said David.

"Grandpa, did they have any girls in the army?" inquired Charity.

No, not as soldiers. The government, however, employed a number of devoted women as nurses. They were often obliged to undergo a great many hardships and self-denials. They were indeed ministering angels to the sick and wounded soldiers. And many a soldier owes his life to the kindness of some faithful army nurse whose name and countenance he has forgotten, but whose kind attention he will never forget.

Thus, while our government did not employ women as soldiers to engage in actual battle, it did employ some as nurses to wait on the sick and wounded. But, children, I know of a government which enlists in its military service not only men and women, but even boys and girls.

“O grandpa,” said David, “do tell us where that government is. What fun it would be if all of us boys and girls could be enlisted in military service. Yes, it would be sport to carry arms, stay in a fort and shoot at the enemy when he comes within gunshot. What fun it would be to put the enemy to flight. How we would beat the drum and shout, victory! victory! victory! O grandpa, do tell us where they enlist boys and girls to defend forts. We will all volunteer, and be good and true as was that little band of faithful soldiers in the late civil war you have been telling us about.”

Well, children, it will be necessary for me to explain matters a little. You know

that during our great civil war there were two governments at war with each other. The one was called the federal government, which consisted of the middle, northern and eastern states, and the other was called the confederate government, which consisted of the southern slave states. Now these two governments were unfriendly to each other. They took up arms and fought against each other. In like manner there are two opposing spiritual kingdoms in this world. The one is good and the other evil. The one is the kingdom of light, and the other the kingdom of darkness. The one is the kingdom of Christ, and the other the kingdom of satan. Now we all belong to the one or the other of these two opposing spiritual kingdoms. Which kingdom would you, children, rather belong to?

"The kingdom of Light and Christ!" they all exclaim.

I hope, dear children, that you are all in that kingdom and will be loyal to your King as long as you live.

Now what I wish to say is this: Christ's kingdom is opposed to the kingdom of satan. There is a great war going on between these two great powers. Satan has all his subjects enlisted in his cause, and Christ wants all His subjects to enlist in His cause.

"I am ready to join," says David. "So am I," says Charity. "And I, too," exclaims Walter.

Now, children, if you have a little patience, I will show you how Christ wants you all to join His army and that He has forts in which He wants to place all good men and women, boys and girls.

The strongholds of His kingdom are certain principles which we are to defend as a garrison defends a fort. He has a long line of these forts, and satan is trying to capture them. Whenever the enemy makes a severe attack, the Great Captain signals to the garrison, "Hold the Fort, for I am coming."

Indeed we may say that Christ has assigned to His followers the whole line of

strongholds which protect His kingdom of Right and Truth from the power of sin and satan. Paul says in Ephesians 6, 12, " We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Now, as every fort has its particular point to guard and its assigned garrison to defend it, so every moral and religious fort has its particular principle to maintain and its assigned garrison. If we belong to the army of Christ and have espoused the cause of truth and righteousness, then we have some special principles to maintain—a fort to hold and a corresponding enemy to resist. In the course of our conversation we will pass along this line of forts and consider the bulwarks of Zion, and cheer and encourage their garrisons.

Lest I weary you, I will close our conversation for to-night; and to-morrow evening I will talk about one of those forts which God wants you to help defend.

CHAPTER II.

Fort Honesty.

I have selected for our topic this evening Fort Honesty. God wants all boys and girls to enter this fort. He wants them to be honest.

Amy asks, "Grandpa, what is honesty?"

It is to deal uprightly with our fellow-men. The other day I saw an advertisement of tobacco. It consisted of an old man with a stove-pipe hat on his head, holding up a plug of tobacco and calling it "Old Honesty." I certainly do not refer to any such filthy thing as tobacco. However genuine, it is not honest. On the contrary, it is very dishonest. It robs the toiler of his wages, the stomach of saliva, the body of health, the nerves of steadiness, and very often the family of food, raiment and shel-

ter. No, tobacco that claims to be honest is a fraud, a deceit and a mock ; and he that uses it is not wise. But I mean honesty as a principle of right dealing with God and man. Honesty is a principle of moral strength. A man that is honest has one strong principle of right. He has influence with others and enjoys their confidence. A man may be poor in worldly goods, yet if he is honest, he is sure to command the respect of his fellowmen.

One of the first principles taught us when we were children, was honesty. Then we had this stronghold committed to us and its faithful defence enjoined upon us. There are many who have maintained this principle from youth. They are reputed as being honest at all times and in all things. But not a few, who, after maintaining the principle for a long time, at last in an unguarded moment allowed themselves to be surprised by satan and yielded to his temptation.

A few years ago there came to my notice

an occurrence which was sad indeed, and almost led me to feel that no one is absolutely honest, but all are subjects of dishonesty and suspicion. A certain man enjoyed the confidence of the community from his youth. He filled different positions of trust, and moved in the line of confidence and promotion. He was beyond suspicion, and for many years held the fort of honesty against the assaults of the great tempter. It was thought that none could fill a certain position in the express company better and safer than he. For a number of years he filled this position with great acceptance. But after many years of apparently faithful service, it was suddenly and very unexpectedly discovered that there was a shortage in his accounts. At first suspicion was fixed upon a young man who was subsequently proven to be innocent. Not the slightest clue of the guilty party could be found. For two years the whole affair was shrouded in mystery. No one breathed the least suspicion that the man who filled

the responsible position and was considered proof against all temptation, might be the guilty one. But his subsequent outlay for his family, in excess of his income, gave rise to a little suspicion. This formed a very delicate clue, but by being carefully unravelled by experienced hands, it led to a shocking revelation. That voice of suspicion which at first was weak and feeble, at last uttered boldly the astonishing declaration, "*Thou art the man.*" Like a thunder clap on a cloudless day, it uttered a truth which the public was not inclined to believe. The whole town and neighborhood were thrown into excitement. Was it because an officer embezzled the funds of an express company? No, that often occurs. But it was because the community felt that a fort had been captured—that a stronghold had been taken by the enemy; that a man who had been noted for honesty so many years had fallen, and with him all the confidence that had been reposed in him. This is not a mere isolated case. Similar cases

are occurring almost daily. How true the admonition of our Lord, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. 10: 12. How important that we daily seek God's grace, and pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

An honest man is said to be a most noble work of creation. There are many examples of persevering honesty. When Pompeii was being exhumed, a sentinel was found who, amidst showers of dust, fire and gas, was true to his trust and died at his post. His name is unknown, but his deed is immortal. The principle of faithfulness to duty under the most trying circumstances lives and is worth more than ten thousand worthless lives. The furies of Vesuvius were turned against that man, but he flinched not; he retreated not; he held his position of trust to the end of life. And the eyes of the nineteenth century witness with exultant admiration his heroic deed. Children, think of this faithful sentinel when you are in positions of trust.

It is said that Dr. Clark, who wrote the commentary on the Bible, when a boy clerked in a dry goods store. One day the proprietor asked him to help stretch a piece of goods which was not quite long enough to meet a certain order. The proprietor thought that if he took one end and Clark the other, they could stretch it sufficiently to make the required length. But Clark refused to help the proprietor. He said it was not honest, and he, like a little hero, defended the principle of honesty by thus refusing to do a dishonest act.

“Grandpa, should not all clerks defend Fort Honesty?” asked Amy.

Yes, my child. All clerks are surrounded by temptations to dishonesty, and they can defend the fort by resisting these temptations. The position of a clerk is a trying one. He is exposed to temptation, because the opportunities of being dishonest are numerous. It is the opportunity that makes the thief in many cases. Some do not steal because they do not have the opportunity.

If any of you ever become a clerk, be honest. Do not take advantage of your customers by overcharging or in giving less change than is due them. Never be guilty of robbing your proprietor by taking, on the sly, articles of merchandize, or change from the money drawer. Be honest to the very penny, and you will fare better in the end.

God calls upon all clerks and merchants to defend this principle. There are many merchants who have the well-merited reputation of being honest. They are reliable, and the people feel safe in dealing with them. They never blarney their customers and use few adjectives in reference to their goods. They give an honest statement as to their quality and price, and they are generally correct in their book accounts. A dishonest merchant is an unprincipled man. He flatters his customers and says much about the superior quality of his goods and their cheapness. His customers are finally drawn in and victimized. They

soon discover that the goods have been too highly rated in quality and price. A feeling of dissatisfaction is produced. They lose confidence in that merchant, and will deal sparingly and suspiciously with him.

Be honest, children. It may appear to be a plodding way of getting along, but it is the best. I have known merchants who have enjoyed the confidence of the community for years. Their prosperity was not rapid, but gradual; slow, but sure. They built up not only a trade, but also a reputation for honesty. They thus maintained in their business this principle and become its true defenders.

“Grandpa, are only merchants called upon to do garrison duty in this fort?” asks David.

Oh, no, my dear child. The tailor is called upon to be honest in making garments. The shoemaker, too, should be honest in putting good material into the shoes he makes, and bestowing good work upon them. And the baker should be hon-

est in his business by using pure material. The carpenter can build a house honestly or dishonestly. The mason can do his work honestly or dishonestly. An honest mechanic is one who puts in his full time, is busy during working hours and does his work well. Any common laborer can rob his employer by not giving in return for his wages a sufficient quantity and quality of work. "Killing time" and "standing out one's road tax," are familiar examples.

Indeed every person is called upon to practice honesty, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the young and the aged. It is a great principle of the Christian religion. It is implied in the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." And it is positively declared in the words, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men."

Solomon in Prov. 15: 3 says, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Nothing can escape His notice. When Achan stole the silver, the gold and the Babylonish garments, he

concealed them, and thought no one would find him out. But God saw him commit the deed, his own conscience condemned him ; and it was not long till his great sin was discovered by the people, and all Israel stoned him, and burned him and raised over him a great heap of stones. This was a monument to his crime and its punishment, and was a warning to God's people.

When Ananias and Sapphira withheld a certain portion from the Lord, they committed the sin of dishonesty. They thought no one knew their crime. When questioned, they lied about the matter. But they could not keep their crime hid from God, who not only disclosed their great sin, but also punished them immediately with death. This incident was faithfully recorded that it might be an admonition to the living in all subsequent time. This man and woman were not only dishonest, but were led by their dishonest act to tell a lie. So boys often do a dishonest act, and when they are questioned about it, they tell lies. Thus

one sin leads to another, one crime to another. One step in the downward road prepares for another.

Ananias and Sapphira were covetous. They pretended to have given their all to the Master, but kept back a part. So, we fear, many in our day are influenced by the same selfish spirit. Like them they may be prosperous and appear to be honest in their dealings with their fellowmen. Perhaps they are honest in their dealings because it is policy. But in dealing with God and His cause they act from neither policy nor principle. They daily partake of God's bounty and are dependent upon Him who is the giver of every good and perfect gift. But they do not recognize the claims of God upon them. They virtually defraud their Maker out of His just claims. In Malachi 3: 8 we read, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." In the Old Testament times the people were obliged to

give one-tenth of their income to the cause of the Lord. In our dispensation there is no law rigidly binding us to a specified amount, but we are taught that all we have belongs to God, and that it is only loaned to us, and we are to use it for His honor and glory. Christ says in Matt. 10 : 8, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Christ highly commended the poor widow who cast in two mites, which was all that she had. The rich usually give but little of their abundance, but this poor widow gave all that she had. One of His disciples said, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee." Mark 10 : 28. But what are professed Christians of to-day doing? In some churches the benevolence does not average yearly twenty-five cents per member, in others not over fifty cents per member, and in a very few churches does it average one dollar per member. The Jews gave one-tenth of their increase, but very few professed Christians in our day give one-hundredth. Is not this withholding from the Lord that which belongs to Him?

Christ says the poor ye have always with you. He has His orphans' homes, the schools of the prophets where young men are prepared for the ministry, His superannuated ministers, and His missions at home and in foreign lands. These are some of the institutions of His kingdom. And He demands a portion of our income to sustain them. In answer to the great question, "Will a man rob God?" I say the man who is withholding the Lord's portion does this. Hence "the love of money is the root of all evil."—1 Tim. 6 : 10. Jesus said, Mark 10 : 23 : "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God."

A man who sets his heart upon his riches is an idolator, and "no idolator shall inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. 6 : 9. Our Savior said in Matth. 6 : 24, "No man can serve two masters : for either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Ananias and Sapphira tried to serve these two mas-

ters, but they were wrecked for two worlds, this and the future world. God entered into a fearful reckoning with them, and on account of their dishonesty and lying, they were stricken with instant death, temporal and eternal. We fear that many whom God has blessed with abundance will, in like manner, have a fearful reckoning at the last day. We should never forget that withholding the Lord's portion or that which we should give to charitable objects, is dishonesty in the sight of God. Solomon says in Prov. 11 : 24, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth ; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." At the judgment day Jesus will declare who were honest and who were not ; who withheld His portion and who did not. Let us turn to Matthew's 25th chapter and read from the 31st verse to the 46th verse : "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory : And before him

shall be gathered all nations ; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats : And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : For I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in : Naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, and fed thee, or thirsty, and gave thee drink ? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in ? or naked, and clothed thee ? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then

shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Now, children, if you would enjoy the favor of God in this life and His commendations at the judgment day, be honest, not only in your dealings with mankind, but be honest in a higher sense by meeting the just claims of God and mankind upon your

liberality. We are servants of God. He has committed talents to us, and we are to use them for His glory and the good of mankind. That is rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. Withhold not that which belongs to God or your fellowmen. Remember that honesty is a great moral principle. You are called upon to hold this fort, that is, to maintain and practice this principle. This night, before lying down to sleep, ask God to give you grace to be honest, that you may never take advantage of your playmates or deceive them in any way; and that should your lives be spared, that you may become honest men and women. As it is now late, we will close our interesting conversation, and, if God permits, we will talk about another fort to-morrow night.

CHAPTER III.

Fort Truth.

Well, children, this evening finds you all here punctually. I am glad that you are here in good time, so as to take part in our evening talk. I like promptness and punctuality. I often think that a minister must be annoyed by tardy members coming into church after the services have commenced.

Well, children, before taking up the subject for this evening's talk, perhaps it would be better to review our last evening's conversation. Do you remember what we were talking about last evening?

"Honesty—Fort Honesty," all reply.

Have you practiced honesty since last night?

David said: "I found a knife to-day on my way to school and I was tempted to

keep quiet about it. But I could not forget what you told us last night, and something whispered in my ear, 'Hold the fort.' I then prayed to God to help me to be honest. I then went to my teacher and told him to take the knife and try to find its owner. The teacher stated to the school that I had found a knife, and that the scholar who had lost it should come forward and receive it. Little Guy Scott had lost it and the teacher returned it to him, who seemed to be very much pleased. The teacher then told the school that this was a noble example of honesty on my part, and urged them all to do in like manner. I am glad that I did not keep the knife. I know I would have been unhappy and in constant fear of being found out, but now I have an approving conscience and the good will of my teacher and the thanks of little Guy Scott. I feel, too, that I have held the fort."

Well, David, I am glad to hear that you took such a noble stand. You had a hard struggle with the enemy, but you gained the

victory over the great tempter. This one triumph will give you strength to resist the tempter on other similar occasions. I hope you will all pursue the course that David did on every occasion like this. Now we will proceed with our topic for to-night. I have selected for our conversation this evening Fort Truth.

Truth is a very important principle of Christ's kingdom. God wants all boys and girls, as well as men and women, to speak the truth. If satan is "a liar, and the father of it," John 8: 44, then all God's children should be opposed to falsehood and vigorously defend the principle of truth. Truth is one of the strongholds of Christ's kingdom, and we should all help to defend it.

It is said that George Washington never told a lie. I do not know whether that is true or not. At least I can think of no instance in which he told a wilful falsehood, but there is on record an instance when he bravely told the truth. A little hatchet had been given him. It was natural that

in his great delight he would go about hacking and cutting everything in his way. One day his father observed that a young cherry tree was cut down. When the question was asked by the father, Who cut this tree down? George frankly confessed that he did it. It took courage to tell the truth, but that courage little George had. He grew up to be a man of courage, and thus became the brave defender of his countrymen's rights. I suppose his parents were displeased at the recklessness of their little son in cutting down a choice cherry tree, but they were undoubtedly pleased to hear him so frankly tell the truth. George might have said, "My father is greatly displeased that this choice cherry tree is cut down, and if I tell him that I did it, he will punish me severely. I believe I will tell him that I did not do it." But George did not so reason. He realized now that it was wrong to have cut down the tree, and that it would be very wrong to tell a falsehood about it. This would only make the evil greater. He

knew, too, that if he deceived his parents, he could not deceive God. Hence, like a little man—like a brave hero, he confessed the deed. In thus telling the truth, George Washington held the fort. He did not allow the enemy to capture it. So you see that the very first great victory which Washington achieved was not won on the battle field of the revolutionary war when he was a grown up man, six feet tall, but his first great victory was won when he was a very little boy. I suppose it cost him a great struggle. But like a true hero he yielded not to fear or falsehood. He triumphantly held the fort. Now, children, just as that boy of a few years defended a great principle by telling the truth, so you can all help to defend that fort. It matters not how young or little one is, he can help to hold the fort.

“Grandpa, what makes people tell lies?” asks Amy.

One cause is fear. When a boy does some wrong, as stealing something or break-

ing some valuable thing, he fears that if he is found out, he will be punished. In order to cover his crime, he will tell a lie. A lie thus told only makes the case worse. If it is a sin to steal, it certainly is a great sin to try to cover up the theft by a lie. Sometimes a lie is told to secure the good opinion of people. Sometimes boys and girls brag considerably. They exaggerate their statements, and thus try to make a favorable impression. Sometimes lying becomes a habit with some people. It is sometimes dangerous to be an easy talker. A glib tongue will often run ahead of the judgment, and follow a vain imagination. We have known persons of a glib tongue and lively imagination to entertain their company by spinning out fish stories. The only fault about the stories was that they were either exaggerated or entirely false. Whatever their imagination pictured to their mind, they told as truth, whereas perhaps it had no existence except in their imagination.

It is possible to tell a lie by being silent.

One time a boy broke a window glass in the school house. When the teacher discovered the broken pane of glass, he asked the school who had done it. This little boy with the other scholars remained silent—he did not say a word about the matter. Somehow he did not feel right. When he went home he feared to enter the house. He did not like to meet his parents. At night he was very uneasy, and was afraid to go to bed. After being awake some time, he fell asleep. In the morning he felt shy and afraid of his parents. He carried a great load on his little heart. After breakfast he started to school, but did not wear the usual smile on his face. He did not like the looks of the school house that morning. Even his schoolmates seemed to say, “You broke the window glass, I will tell on you.” He feared to meet his teacher that morning. There was a great struggle in his little breast. It was a struggle between fear and truth. He felt that he ought to acknowledge the deed, but fear overcame him. He was very

unhappy. He could not study his lesson, but rested his head upon the desk. After awhile he began to sob. And when the teacher asked him what was the matter, he sobbed more and burst out crying. The teacher asked him if he were sick. "No," he sobbed. What then is the matter? Did *you* break the window glass? He then cried violently. The little fellow cried and said that he did. While the teacher pardoned him, concluding that he had suffered enough punishment, there was a feeling among all that he had told a lie by his silence. How much better it would have been if, as soon as the accident had occurred, he had at once reported it to his teacher. The teacher would have forgiven him and loved him more for telling the truth. Instead of having so much unhappiness, he would have experienced the joys of pardon; and would have been looked upon as a brave boy who held the Fort of Truth against the attacks of the foe. But, by not going to the teacher and frankly telling him of the accident and ask-

ing his pardon, and by being silent when the teacher asked who had broken the glass, he told a lie, and that lie meant that he was a cowardly soldier in Fort Truth.

Thus one can tell a falsehood by simply being quiet. And there is such a thing as telling a falsehood by telling only part of the truth. Little Johnnie West was giving his mother an account of his whereabouts on a certain afternoon. He named several places where he had been and what he had been doing there, but he carefully avoided saying anything about having been down to the creek and in swimming. He left her under the impression that he was not at the creek, much less in swimming. By his partial silence he told a lie. To guard against falsehood by a partial silence, witnesses before magistrates are required to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Some are thus tempted to tell a lie through fear of punishment; but they should not only fear their parents and teachers, but also

God, who is displeased with the liar. Some are tempted to tell lies through love of gain, as was the case of Ananias and Sapphira. Others tell falsehoods and slander their neighbors from pure malice. And not a few from indifference. But a lie is a lie, and is injurious to mankind and very offensive to God. He has said in His Holy Word that "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Rev. 2: 8. God wants every boy and girl to hold this Fort of Truth. He signals the message, "Hold the fort, for I am coming. I will help you by my grace." Let us pray, therefore, that God will give us grace to be honest and truthful. Our blessed Savior says, "Let your communication be, Yea, yea: Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Matth. 5: 37. May our prayer ever be, Lord Jesus, thou who art absolute truth, help us to think the truth, speak the truth, and act the truth.

CHAPTER IV.

Fort Humility.

Good-evening, my dear children. I am glad to see you all present. I certainly feel that you are interested in the subject of "Hold the Fort." Now, before we consider the subject for this evening, I must ask you a few questions by way of review. What was our subject last night?

All, "Fort Truth."

Now all who have been truthful the last day, will hold up your hands. (All hands go up.)

Well, Amy, how did you hold Fort Truth?

"I tangled mamma's thread, and when she asked, Who did this? I said, I did, mamma."

That was right, my little darling. You

were not only truthful, but also honest. If you had denied it, you would not only have told a falsehood, but you would also have been dishonest in thus putting the blame on some one else.

And David, will you tell us how you held Fort Truth ?

“ When the teacher asked all who did not whisper a word in school, to put up their hands, I did not put up my hand.”

And so you whispered in school, did you ?

“ Yes, grandpa, I whispered. I would not put up my hand and tell the teacher a falsehood.”

That is right, my dear child. You spoke the truth by simply keeping your hand down. I have no doubt that many boys and girls tell falsehoods by raising their hands when they should keep them down.

And Charity, how did you hold the Fort of Truth ?

“ Well, grandpa,” said Charity, “ when playing, I ran against mamma’s choice lily and broke off a part of it. I felt very sorry, as she had received it from aunt Jane and

prized it very highly. As I was thinking what you said last evening about honesty, I thought I would go right to mamma and tell her of the mishap. I not only told her about the accident, but also that I was very sorry."

That was right. You thought the truth, and you spoke the truth. May God lead you always to think, act and speak the truth. I have no doubt that while your mother was sorry that you broke her choice lily, she felt happy to learn that her daughter was so truthful.

Now the subject for this evening's conversation is Fort Humility. This seems to be rather a strange name for one of God's forts, but the Bible says much about this Christian virtue. The clear command is given, "Be ye clothed in humility." In Matth. 23: 12 we read, "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." While satan encourages the spirit of pride in his subjects, the Lord Jesus demands the spirit of humility in His followers.

Pride is just the opposite of humility. A proud girl feels and thinks that she is better than some other girls, simply because she has wealthier parents, or is dressed better or has a prettier face. She generally carries her head high and is a little overbearing in her treatment of other girls. Sometimes she boasts of the wealth of her parents and the cost and beauty of her dress. She treats her less favored associates in a way that cannot fail to pain them. If she has a party, she often slights her nearest associates, because she does not regard them "tony" enough. Hence she selects a girl here and there in the neighborhood according to the whim of her vain fancy. She entirely overlooks the true object of social gatherings—the social benefit of those present. She seeks first and last her own selfish end and aggrandizement. I am reminded here of the instruction our Savior gave His disciples in Luke 14: 12—14, "Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor

thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors ; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind : And thou shalt be blessed ; for they cannot recompense thee : for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

A proud person is a disturbing element in society. He makes every person feel uncomfortable with whom he comes in contact. A lofty look and a high head may be filled with conceit, but may contain little common sense. The experienced old farmer knows that the head of wheat that stands straight up, contains little or no grain ; but the heads that hang down are usually loaded with grain. So true moral worth is most apt to be found among the humble. And it is well known that an empty barrel will make more noise than one that is filled. It is no unusual occurrence that those who have the most shallow minds, are generally very boastful and loquacious. About twenty

years ago I was going to the city of Hazleton, in which Mr. Pardee lived. At a village station a pompous man entered the cars who was full of flourish and very loquacious. He was well dressed and wore a high silk hat. My first impression was that the apparent gentleman was Mr. P., the reputed millionaire of Hazleton. But the sequel proved that my pompous fellow-traveller was a man of much demerit, while the gentleman who bore the name of being a millionaire was an exceedingly unpretentious man, very humble in his appearance, and instead of being inflated with pride, was loaded down with business cares and resembled a plain, honest, hard working man.

Now, children, I have spoken at some length upon the subject of pride to illustrate better its opposite, humility; to show you that all that glitters is not gold; to put you on your guard, so that you will not be deceived by the vain pretensions of the proud and haughty. Humility is a grand principle of the Christian religion; and we as

soldiers of Christ must all try to hold this fort. We maintain this virtue by putting it to practice.

I have been trying to think of some one who is a good soldier in this fort, and I have been thinking about Peter Wilson. Do you know him?

"Yes, grandpa," responds Walter, "we all know him, and we all love him, too."

And why do you all love him?

"I do not know why. He is so common and he seems like one of us. He treats us as his equals, and is not puffed up with big feeling."

Now, children, I think he is a pious, humble Christian. Although his parents are in good circumstances, yet he does not think that he is better than others on this account. Indeed he is just as sociable with poor boys who are not so well dressed, as with those who are well dressed, and whose parents are in good circumstances. He is called the poor boys' friend. And they all feel easy in his presence and enjoy his com-

pany. When he meets a little boy or girl who is timid, he tries to be pleasant to them. I have never heard of him boasting of his rich parents, his good looks, or of his piety. He always appears to be humble. Indeed, while he has many excellent qualities of which he might be proud, he seems to say like the apostle Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am." He seems to act as though by nature he were a great sinner, and dependent not on his own works, but upon the atoning blood of Christ for salvation.

I think there is something heavenly and divine in an humble Christian. To see this virtue in young Christians is certainly very commendable. And I believe nothing will work this sweet spirit in us better than the grace of God. The remembrance of our sinful and lost state, and of what Christ has done for man's redemption, will make us feel humble. The child of God who is redeemed from sin and eternal death, must feel that it was sin that brought Jesus down

from heaven, that caused His agony in the garden, and His atoning death on the cross. Indeed none of us have any room for pride. We were by nature sinners, under condemnation, and if saved at all, we must be saved by the blood of Jesus. No wonder Paul exclaimed in Gal. 6: 14, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Humility is a virtue which we must all defend. Its great enemy is pride. We must try hard to keep pride out of our thoughts, feelings and hearts. Pride is very offensive to God. The Bible denounces it in the strongest language. Let us quote from Scripture concerning it: "Pride do I hate." Prov. 8: 13. In Prov. 6: 16 we read that "These six things doth the Lord hate," and pride is one of those things. "A high look, and a proud heart, is sin." Prov. 21: 4. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Prov. 16: 18. Nothing is so displeasing to God

and disgusting to sensible people as the airs of the haughty and proud. And we know that the Holy Spirit will not stay in a proud heart.

What a blessed example of meekness and humility we have in our divine Master. He was "meek and lowly in heart." Matth. 11: 29. "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8: 9. May we ever pray that God would give us His grace to be meek and humble, and not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; but to think soberly. Our song should be:

"Do not I love thee, O my Lord?

Behold my heart and see;

And turn the dearest idol out

That dares to rival thee."

"Here's my heart—O take and seal it;

Seal it from thy courts above."

May we all possess the sentiment of Paul when he exclaimed, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord

Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. 6: 14.

Humility is a great principle of Christ's kingdom, and we must fight hard to defend it against the assaults of pride. It takes much watching and prayer to hold this fort. It seems that there is not an hour in our life in which we are not obliged to fight against pride.

If a minister of the Gospel seems to succeed in delivering a sermon, the devil is ready to suggest such thoughts as these to his mind: "Well, you preached a fine sermon to-day. You are indeed eloquent. You stand high in the scale of pulpit ability, and you should not regard yourself as a merely ordinary preacher." Ah! it is the devil trying to capture that minister's Fort of Humility. Once a theological student was invited to fill the pulpit of Dr. ——. He regarded this invitation as a great honor and cheerfully consented to comply. The devil put such thoughts as these into the

shallow head of this student: "You must be considered a young man of marked ability or you would not be invited to fill the pulpit of the renowned pastor, Dr. ——. Your conduct and manners should not be inferior to the high estimation the doctor has evidently placed upon you. Your star is evidently rising, and you ought to let it shine." The young man accordingly let his star shine, but it soon fell like a meteor, as the sequel proves. On Sunday morning this pompous student might have been seen walking with measured steps to the church. With an air of great importance he slowly walked up the aisle, giving all an opportunity of seeing the orator of the day. To the right of the pulpit he carefully placed his high silk hat, then his gold-headed cane which he had borrowed, and his new kid gloves he laboriously removed from his hands and placed them into his hat. With assumed dignity he entered the pulpit. After going through the formalities of silent prayer he surveyed his audience. He then adjusted

his cravat, his mustache, his mouth, his nose, and finally his throat. This scene was accompanied by a few flourishes of the handkerchief and a little artificial coughing. When all was ready, he began the service in a high key. His looks were lofty. He read and prayed in a lofty key. He began to preach in a high-sounding and lofty manner. He had scarcely proceeded ten minutes with his discourse, when it was apparent to all that the aspiring and soaring eagle had reached his climax and was rapidly declining. It was not long until he literally broke down in his discourse. With confusion and shame he concluded the service as best he could. He did not know where to look, as he neither wished any one to see him, nor did he wish to see any one. He gathered up his traps of pretended dignity, his hat, cane and gloves, and began to sneak out of the church. He suddenly came upon an old man in the aisle who, tapping him on the shoulder, said, "Young man, had you gone up as you came down,

you might have come down as you went up.” He meant that if the young man had gone up into the pulpit in the spirit of humility and of dependence on God, he might have come down with a feeling of satisfaction and respect. Truly, “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” Prov. 16: 18.

Parents cannot be too careful in guarding themselves against pride. The dear children are to the family what flowers are to the garden. Parents should appreciate them as the gift of God. But whence comes the thought generally that their children are better and more talented than those of their neighbors? Ah, the devil often suggests such thoughts to parents and tries to make idols of their children, so that they will pay their devotion to them, and not to the true God. It is right for parents to love their children and rejoice in them, but when in the pride of their hearts they worship them, they commit the sin of idolatry. May we not suppose that God often takes

away children that He may remove the idols from their parents? To avoid idolatry, parents should not only rejoice in their children as the gift of God, but should also endeavor to realize their dependence upon God for the continuation of domestic happiness and the blessing of children.

Children should guard against the great sin of pride. Satan will tempt them whenever he has an opportunity. When you stand before the looking glass, he suggests the thought that you are pretty, and would induce you to worship self instead of God. When you view your dress, he suggests that it is prettier than that of your playmates. He is continually trying to get you to compare yourself with others, and tells you that you are better than they. Indeed we have known cases that when little girls received new hats or dresses, it made them vain. The devil sometimes makes little girls think they are better dressed than others, and thus the spirit of pride is awakened in their little hearts. Even a prize won at a school or in

a contest, is an occasion of which the devil often takes advantage to whisper such thoughts as these in the ear, "You are smart. No one else could have obtained the prize." With such thoughts comes the feeling of importance and haughtiness. It requires a great struggle sometimes to maintain the spirit of humility. We must continually think of our faults and shortcomings, and of what God requires from us in His Holy Word. This will fill us with a sense of our own unworthiness, and will humble us.

CHAPTER V

Fort Patience.

Well, my dear children, I am glad to see you here so prompt this evening. You seem to be interested in our talk on the subject of "Hold the Fort." Can you remember what our subject was last evening?

All, "Fort Humility."

How many held the fort since last evening?

All exclaimed, "I did."

Well, little Amy, how did you hold the Fort of Humility?

"I was at school to-day with my brand new dress which the teacher said was pretty, and I did not feel proud at all. I just played and talked with the other little girls who cannot dress so well because their parents are poor. I did not think about my

dress at all, I thought only about how I might make my little schoolmates happy. Indeed I love them and always speak to them. They are such good little girls and know how to behave."

Well, Amy, I am glad that you know that it is not the dress that makes beauty. "Pretty is that pretty does." It is true there is a saying that feathers make the bird, but they do not make the singer. So clothes may make a good outward appearance, but they cannot make the character. And that person who is proud on account of a new dress is both vain and silly.

Well, David, how did you hold Fort Humility?

"Well, grandpa, at school I spelled two words which were missed by others, and I passed to the head of the spelling class. I felt good that I had spelled two words which the others missed, and that I now stood at the head of the class. But when the teacher said that it was the first time in three weeks that I was at the head of the class, I then

felt that I was not so very smart after all. Indeed I thought of how often others had spelled words that I missed. I then began to feel that I ought to be ashamed of myself for not being at the head of the class more than once in three weeks. I felt that I was not much after all. I suppose this was a feeling of humility."

You are right, my little boy. You felt humbled. Now I will tell you what made you feel humble. It was not your getting at the head of your class. No, not that exactly, but it was the recollection that you missed so often and only got head once in three weeks. Yes, the remembrance of our shortcomings will keep us humble.

And Charity, how did you hold Fort Humility?

"I was required to speak a piece this afternoon at school before all the scholars and the visitors present. I dreaded it very much. And, before I went to school, I went into my room and prayed that God would give me courage to speak my piece.

I then went to school and felt that God would help me recite as He had on former occasions. I did not then dread that duty. When I was called upon to recite, I did not mind it at all, and the teacher and visitors said I did nicely. And, although they all praised me, I did not feel proud or feel that I was smart, because I remembered how much I had dreaded the task and how God had helped me in answer to my prayer. I felt that God should have the credit and praise instead of myself. And when I returned home I went to my room and knelt down by my bed and thanked God for helping me. I felt happy, not because I recited my piece so well, but because God had given me courage and helped me."

You certainly experienced true Christian humility. If we all would remember that our blessings are from God, we would give Him the credit instead of taking it to ourselves. That is just what the apostle means when he says, "By the grace of God I am what I am." 1 Cor. 15 : 10. Your expe-

rience in reciting before the school has been my experience in public prayer. I have learned that God is my best helper in every time of need. To daily live a life of dependence on God is a broken and contrite heart which God will not despise.

Now, children, I am glad that you are learning to hold the Fort of Humility. Never forget your true pattern who said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matth. 11: 29.

The topic which I have chosen for this evening is Fort Patience. Patience is a great principle of the Christian religion. It is one of the strongholds of Christ's kingdom. While all are called upon to hold Fort Honesty and Fort Truth, a certain class are called upon to hold this fort. Whom do you think the Great Captain calls upon to hold this fort?

"I suppose the strong and able bodied men and women. Those who have a con-

stitution to endure all kinds of hardships," responded Charity.

No, my dear child. God calls upon those who are supposed by some to be of no use, to defend this stronghold of His kingdom. In this fort He has placed all the sick boys and girls, the lame and the blind, the deaf and the dumb, those who have great burdens, troubles and sorrows. Yes, He has placed in this fort all the aged fathers and mothers who are supposed to be worn out.

"That must be a strange-looking garrison, if the sick, lame, halt, blind and the old people are in it," exclaimed David.

"It would seem more like a hospital or an asylum. I wonder of what use such soldiers would be to hold a fort?" said Charity.

The very persons whom people think could accomplish nothing, God makes use of to accomplish His purposes. And I will try to show you that a sick or blind boy or girl often makes one of the best soldiers for Christ, and that old, wornout people are often great defenders of Christ's kingdom.

I have in mind a little girl whom we will call Carrie. She has been afflicted since she was six years old. It is probable that she never will get well, as her spine was injured by an accident. She sits up most of the time in her invalid chair, in which she can be pushed about in the room. In summer she is often taken out into the yard under the shade trees. While her associates can run and skip and play in the full enjoyment of freedom and health, poor Carrie is confined to her chair. She never complains of her hard lot, but seems to be fully resigned to the will of her heavenly Father. Although afflicted so much, without any prospect of recovery, she seems so calm, resigned and heavenly-minded that one cannot help but feel that in her soul there is joy, and peace, and happiness. She is a little heroine of patience. Like her suffering Savior, she bears her cross without murmuring. What a beautiful example to all suffering children. Those who complain so bitterly at little trials and crosses, should learn a lesson of patience and resignation from this little girl.

Yes, that little sick girl is a good soldier of the cross, and does much toward defending and maintaining the principle of Christian patience. A religion that will make one so happy in sickness must be worth having. And a young Christian that can exercise so much patience must be a good soldier. We often wonder why God would allow a girl so young to be thus afflicted. But, however much we may consider her life rendered useless, we know that God has a great mission for her, and that mission is to exercise patience and declare that there is a reality in the Christian religion. She thus became a true witness for Christ.

You have all heard of Mr. Johnson, the blind man. Once he could see as well as any of you, but he lost his sight. It seems very hard to be blind, and not able to see the world of beauty with which we are surrounded, nor to look upon the face of our friends. In addition to this, he had a family who are dependent upon him. Indeed the future must appear as dark to him as the

natural world is. If any one has reason to complain, he certainly has. Think of his great deprivation in being shut out of the world by his total blindness, and of the great helplessness in providing a livelihood for his family. Nor have we any reason to suppose that his blindness was sent directly upon him for some personal sin. We read in the Bible that Zedekiah had his eyes put out as a punishment for his disloyalty. But there evidently was no such direct cause in this case. We may say that all natural affliction is caused by original sin. And while God permits these afflictions to befall the children of men, He overrules them for the good of his own people.

Now when blindness, which is one of the greatest calamities that can befall man, comes upon the child of God, He does not say to such an unfortunate creature: "You are now blind. Sit down and lament your hard fate. Think only of your misery and the darkness to which it has banished you. Be unhappy and spend all your days in

mourning. Fold your hands, for there is no work for a blind man to do." No. God does not address any such hopeless remarks to the blind. But He says, "I have a great mission for you. I have a certain fort for you to hold—Fort Patience. You can do this better than the well and healthy man. I want you to be a witness to the world of My saving grace. I want you to show to the world that while all is dark without, all is light within; that while all human help may be gone, there is an unseen almighty hand which sustains and supports you; that while all is gloomy and cheerless without, all is bright and cheerful within. Yes, I want you to preach patience to your fellowmen—preach it by example as well as by precept."

It does not seem a hard task for Mr. Johnson to exercise patience and bear his heavy cross without murmuring. His mind continually dwells upon such thoughts as these: I cannot see the natural world, but in the visions of my soul I have glimpses of the spiritual world, and will soon enter into

that glory to which the apostle refers in 1 Cor. 2: 9, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." I shall soon see the heavenly city, with its golden streets and its pearly gates. I shall soon see the great white throne, the Tree of Life and the River of Life. It is true I cannot see the faces of my dear friends on earth, although I am assured of their heartfelt sympathies. But soon I shall look upon the face of my Redeemer in glory. I shall see there in glorious array the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles and martyrs. Yes, I shall soon see the King in His glory, and my kinship in white. I know that I am blind and cannot support my family as I once did, but—"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." 2 Tim. 1: 12. I rely so entirely upon my God that I feel that a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without

His notice, and that the very hairs of my head are all numbered. I feel that He will make all things work together for my good. Yes, He has promised never to leave or forsake me.

Were it not for this almighty Friend, I might indeed be unhappy and uneasy. But when I remember His ability and willingness to care for His dependent ones, I feel that He will keep me and mine in the hollow of His hand and under the shadow of His wings. It is this thought that makes me feel so happy, that makes me look so cheerful, and that makes me so resigned to what some call a hard fate.

Were it not for the grace of God, Mr. Johnson would be a very unfortunate man, as well as a very unhappy man. Shut out from the world, he seems to live so much in communion with God. At times he seems to be holding communion with angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. Then again there seems to play upon his face a

heavenly smile as if angelic music filled his soul.

It is no unusual thing to hear persons who enjoy all their five senses say, "I wish I could have the sweet experience of joy, peace and contentment which this blind man possesses. It is true, he is poor in sight, but rich in grace."

This poor blind man is a good soldier of the cross. He bears his great affliction meekly, and is a standing reproach to all those who, in the enjoyment of their senses, are continually complaining. He demonstrates to the world that it is not wealth, health or any natural gift that is the highest blessing to man, but the religion of Jesus Christ. Yes, it is this that is the true secret of that sweet resignation which we find among God's afflicted children.

While the natural eye is the organ of vision to the body and can see only material objects, faith is the organ of vision to the soul, and it sees the unseen. Faith peers through the veil of sense and beholds spirit-

ual things. It looks beyond this life to the life to come. It looks from earth to heaven and sees the

“Sweet fields arrayed in living green,
And rivers of delight.”

Having spiritual eyes, he beholds those things which are spiritual and eternal.

“He climbs where Moses stood
And views the landscape o’er.”

I must tell you about another good soldier in Fort Patience. It was old mother Stine. I was well acquainted with her. She suffered for many years with the distressing disease called asthma. This good mother trained up her family for the Lord, and while they were a comfort to her, she was herself an invalid for many years. I called to see her when she had a severe attack of asthma. I thought she would die in her struggle for breath. Poor in this world’s goods and poor in body, as she was a mere skeleton and apparently dying, she exclaimed in broken accents, “Bless the Lord, O my soul.” I was astonished to see this

afflicted mother in Israel so cheerful and hear her exclaim, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." I wondered to myself, for what can she bless the Lord? She was poor in this world's goods, poor in health, with no prospect of getting better. For a moment I was confounded, but then I remembered that she was a Christian woman—a child of God, and that she was in possession of blessings which I could not see by my natural sense of vision.

She rejoiced that she was a child of God, that her sins were pardoned, and that she would soon enter into that rest which remaineth unto the people of God. She rejoiced that she could suffer with Christ, so that she might also reign with Him. She patiently bore her cross in anticipation of the crown of life.

How faithfully did she hold the Fort of Patience. I often thought that she was one of God's most faithful servants. By her sweet submission she declared that one can be a happy Christian under the most un-

favorable circumstances. She was thus a good example of Christian patience and resignation. She not only endured her sufferings patiently, but she patiently awaited her appointed time.

Thus you see God looks mostly to the afflicted—the halt and the blind, the sick and the aged and decrepit—to occupy and to hold Fort Patience. They have a great mission to perform in this world in the interest of Christ's kingdom. Scores have been led to Christ through the silent preaching of Christian invalids. During the early persecutions of the Church not a few pagans were convicted and converted to Christianity by the patient suffering and death of the Christian martyrs. They felt that a religion that would enable its witnesses to suffer and die so resignedly must be genuine. Thus in a certain sense the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church. The ashes of the martyrs are like those of the Egyptian Phenix from which sprang a new life.

What a standing reproof to the careless and indifferent are the good examples of

God's afflicted children. If they are so resigned and confiding in their affliction, should we not be so too? If you should ever become an invalid or decrepit, do not think your work is done and there is nothing more for you to do. In the providence of God it may just be beginning. You may yet win the brightest laurels and achieve the greatest victory for the cause of Christ.

Whenever God permits affliction to befall you in this life, be assured that He intends you to glorify Him in your affliction; that, as a follower of Jesus Christ, you may reflect His image and manifest His Spirit. Christ is no more on earth as He was at one time, but He is represented by His Spirit who dwells in the believer and is reflected by him. As Christ manifested the greatest resignation in His sufferings, so His true followers will manifest His Spirit in their afflictions. In this way they maintain this principle of Christ's kingdom, and hold the Fort of Patience.

I believe that the afflicted and suffering Christians constitute the flower of Christ's

army on earth. If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him. No cross, no crown. It is suffering here below, but rest above. How significant are the words of Rev. 7 : 14, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." There are many who have died for Christ's sake. Think of the thousands of martyrs of the first three centuries and during the Reformation. They, like true soldiers, died for the cause of their blessed Master. Like their Savior, they endured the cross, and have now entered upon their rich reward.

Those, too, who in our day for the sake of their blessed Master deny themselves of pleasure and ease, and endure their sufferings patiently, belong to the great army of Christ and shall shine as the stars. In this world men who have the greatest wealth, best culture or education, or occupy the highest civil or social position, are the human stars that shine the most. But in heaven

those humble and patient Christians who suffered the most while on earth, become the brightest stars there.

Now, children, I see that it is getting quite late, and we must close our interesting conversation. God willing, we will meet to-morrow evening and consider the subject of Fort Perseverance.

CHAPTER VI.

Fort Perseverance.

Good evening, my dear children. I am glad to see you present at our little meeting. One of the greatest pleasures that a grandparent can have is the society of his grandchildren, especially when they are interested in his conversation, as you seem to be.

Now, children, before taking up the subject for to-night, I would like to review our last evening's talk a little. What was our subject last evening?

All, "Fort Patience."

Whom does God more especially call upon to defend this stronghold of His kingdom?

"The sick, the halt, the blind and the aged," exclaimed Walter.

Does God ever call upon children to hold this fort?

All, "Yes."

Can you remember any one who is patient in affliction, or have any of you practiced patience since last evening?

“Yes, grandpa, I did,” said Amy. “You know Mr. Strong and his family visited us to-day. Well, it was pretty late when they came this forenoon, and that made dinner late, and I became very hungry. But when dinner was ready, mamma said I should wait, as there was not enough room for all. I was so hungry and felt very much disappointed. At first I felt something coming up my throat, and I had to swallow and swallow to keep it down. And my cheeks became red, and tears started in my eyes. I was just beginning to think hard toward my mamma, when all at once something said, ‘Hold the Fort—you must be patient, and all will be right.’ I then began to feel happy, and I forgot that I was hungry. I felt that poor tired mamma was doing the best she could under the circumstances, and I did not feel cross at all. I smiled, and talked and laughed as if nothing were the matter.”

Well, my little daughter, I am glad that you were able to hold the Fort of Patience, that you did not lose the control of your temper. What a silly thing it is for children to get cross because their parents sometimes require them to wait until strangers have eaten. I have no doubt that it cost you a great struggle, but you triumphed over self and selfishness at last. You, like a true little hero, held the Fort of Patience. Solomon says in Prov. 16 : 32, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty : and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Well, David, was your patience tried to-day ?

"Yes," replied David. "Our pigs broke out, and I had such a time to get them back into their pen. I have often heard that an ox was dumb, but I believe that pigs are both dumb and stubborn. I could not head them off. They were bound to go where I did not want them to go. I never had such a time in my life. Many a boy would have

sworn and become raving mad. But I was thinking of what you had said on the subject of patience, and I tried hard to keep cool and not get cross. But I had to struggle hard. I then thought what is the use of becoming impatient. My impatience would not make the pigs any better, nor would it make it easier to get them into the pen. I began to think, too, that the pigs had been confined to their pen so long that they had become tired of their close confinement and were now enjoying their liberty. Then I did not blame them so much for not wanting to be penned up again. These thoughts enabled me to take the matter more coolly, and I exercised a little patience and I then soon got them in. It seemed that whenever I became impatient, the pigs became more stubborn."

Dear children, I believe that the dumb brutes are not so dumb as we think they are, and that often they are made bad by bad treatment. A bad driver may spoil the best team. I believe that a dog, cow or

horse may be made bad by the cruelty of his master. When a man is angry and loses the control of his temper, he is not fit to discipline a child or manage a cow or horse. I know a young minister who cured a young balky horse by kindness and patience. This horse was the gift of his father and had a number of balky fits. When the horse balked, this good brother, instead of clubbing it, or building a fire under it, or tying a pack of firecrackers to its tail and setting them on fire, simply exercised patience and waited till the horse was ready to start. He was frequently obliged thus to wait on the highway, sometimes being accompanied by his estimable lady, but patience finally gained the victory. If I mistake not, he now has an excellent horse which cheerfully obeys him.

Well, children, your experience is good, and I am glad that you appreciate my instruction and are trying to put it into practice. Let us now proceed to the topic for this evening, which is Fort Perseverance.

God wants every one to hold this fort. He has a mission for every one, and it is only by exercising this principle that one may hope to succeed. It requires no effort for water to flow down stream. So it requires no effort to sin. If one simply follows his evil inclinations, he can sin with the greatest ease. All that one needs to do is to drift with the current—the broad way that leadeth to destruction in which the many go. But to lead a good life, a sinless life, one must not drift with the current, but must row against it. The moment he ceases to row, he drifts down the current. It is only by persevering that he can ascend the stream and at last reach the proper landing. If a boy wishes to learn a trade, he must persevere. Our Savior thus learned the carpenter trade. The boy that would become a scholar, must persevere in his studies. He dare not become discouraged or give up. There are hard lessons to be mastered, difficult problems to be solved, and scores of knotty questions to be investigated and unravelled.

The hill of science is rugged and as difficult to ascend as Lookout Mountain, but perseverance and faith will surmount it.

So it is in overcoming bad habits. We must persevere. Bad habits are like weeds which can be destroyed only by perseverance. The plantain is a familiar pest. It seems to intrude itself into every yard and lawn. It requires much perseverance, as well as watchfulness, to extract it and keep it in subjection. The Canada thistle is another great pest. The legislature has hurled its anathema against it. But it will require perseverance on the part of both the legislature and the yeomanry of our land to beat back the intruder.

So it requires persevering effort to overcome bad habits and bad inclinations. When one becomes a Christian, the Christ nature will militate against human nature, or, as Paul expresses it in Gal. 5 : 17, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh : and these are contrary the one to the other ; so that ye cannot do the

things that ye would." This is nothing more than the divine leaven leavening our nature and bringing it into subjection to the kingdom of Christ. Nor is the spirit always victorious in these struggles. At times victory seems to incline toward the flesh. In the civil war there were times when the Confederates defeated the Federals, but the final result was favorable to the latter; so it is in our spiritual conflicts. Paul expresses these reverses of the Christian life in Rom. 7: 22, 23, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." It is the Christian who perseveres in the divine life to the end that will succeed. The promise to such is, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2: 10. Hence Paul (Heb. 10: 23) exhorts us in these words, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering."

Religion is a race, the beginning is not the end ; it is a warfare, the battle begun is not the victory ; it is a life, but the beginning of that life is not its completion. Many commence the Christian life, but they do not continue steadfast unto the end. " When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." Matth. 13 : 21. Again we read, " Ye did run well : who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth ?" Gal. 5 : 7. The brick-layer by persevering in laying up one brick upon another, finally succeeds in the completion of the house. So it is in the formation of character. This is not obtained all at once as a mere gift. But it is something that we must build up as a child builds a block-house. Character is formed of good habits and acquired qualities. We build up a character by adding one good habit to another. We ought to be continually adding to our character. This is being transformed more and more into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is an old saying, Rome was not

built in one day. So no great and good character was built up in one day. But it requires perseverance. The mason may have a large boulder to split. He strikes it with his hammer continuously, one blow after another ; at last it gives way. It was not one blow that split the rock, but a number of blows. So it is line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, that finally triumphs over the stony heart.

When the sculptor is making a statue out of a rough piece of marble, it requires many blows, much scraping and touching up here and there to form the life-like image. So the boy who perseveres with his studies, will become a scholar. The girl who perseveres with her music, will become a musician. And the apprentice who perseveres will become master of his trade. In like manner only will the Christian succeed in winning the prize, and obtain the crown of everlasting life. There is such a doctrine as "the perseverance of saints." God will give His

children grace to persevere if they will only use the right means.

There is a false way of persevering. Two persons go to the North Mountain to pick huckleberries. The one perseveres in roaming over the mountain and picking here and there. As a rolling stone gathers no moss, so he gathers but few berries. The other person travels over less ground, picks perseveringly where there are berries, and at the close of the day is less weary and has many more berries. And what is better still, he has cultivated the habit of concentration and sticking to one thing and place at a time.

So it is in the religious life. I have in mind two boys. The one on Sabbath will run from one Sabbath school to another, and from one church to another. He has thus acquired the habit of rambling about. He is gone from home on Sunday the whole day. He believes in union Sunday schools and union churches. He thinks we ought to patronize all Sunday schools and all churches alike. He is a sort of "religious

gad-about." He spends few, if any, hours at home on Sabbath, but perseveres in running from one Sunday school to another, and from one church to another. The result is that he is acquiring the habit of instability and restlessness, and is becoming sensational. He is becoming religiously dissipated. He has little or no influence, and is gathering little or no moral strength. He is driven about by every wind of doctrine and readily falls in with every new and untried method. His vacillating disposition or habit is seen in all he does or undertakes. He dabbles in everything and does not pursue any one thing in particular. He is practically a failure on the farm, in the store, in the workshop, in the Sunday school and in the Church. Truly "a doubleminded man is unstable in all his ways." James 1 : 8. He is, in business and religion, a nuisance.

The other young man attends regularly but one Sunday school. He throws his energies into that. He is loyal to one branch

of the Church of Christ and concentrates his labors there. He has charity for other branches of the Church and attends them as occasion may require. But he recognizes his own church as his spiritual home where he should be found at all its regular services. He believes that every sheep should belong only to one fold and one shepherd. He does not try to spread himself over two or three Sunday schools and churches. He believes that one pasture field is large enough for him, that one Sunday school is sufficient to develop and employ his energies in Sabbath school work, and that one pastor is sufficient to be his spiritual shepherd. This concentration of energy and interest makes him a man of influence and a successful worker in the Sabbath school and Church.

Many of the most important and beneficial discoveries have been effected by perseverance. The greatest inventions of mankind required much patience and perseverance. And the apostle exhorts us, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due sea-

son we shall reap, if we faint not." Gal. 6 : 9. While many start out in the Christian journey, which certainly is a good step, not all continue in that journey. Not a few become weary of well doing and give up the race ere the goal is reached. In the case of a few who entered upon the Christian life, I have seen great zeal manifested at first, but it did not continue long.

Some are religious while they are in a religious atmosphere or surrounded by a religious element. But just as soon as they are taken from the Sunday school or church influence, or leave the neighborhood in which they were brought up, they seem to lose all interest in religion. Such are not sufficiently grounded and rooted in the doctrine and principles of the Christian religion. In speaking of one belonging to this class, the Savior says, "Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while." Matth. 13 : 21. This religion is artificial. Instead of proceeding from a principle within, it is only the creature of external influence, and

when that influence is withdrawn, the religion vanishes. Thus after the death of Jehoida, Joash fell into idolatry. We want our sons and daughters not to be made the passive subjects of an external religion, but the active subjects of an internal religion. It is Christ in the soul that is "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4: 14. The lack of perseverance is often the lack of a new heart. Too many are like some of the Indians who were brought to the Indian school at Carlisle. While under the influence of education and civilization, they appeared to be civilized, but as soon as they passed out of this element and returned to their uncivilized people, they returned to their former uncivilized state. With such there is no stability of character. "They have no root in them." How very important it is that people be thoroughly indoctrinated in the principles of the Christian religion, so that they may know what to believe and lead lives proceeding from faith in Christ and His Word, and

not from anything that is merely external. Concerning some we read in 2 Peter 2 : 22, "It is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again ; and, The sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." So it matters not how high religious fervor may be worked up, it will not stand unless there is a change of heart and sentiment which God's Spirit and truth only can effect in the soul.

If you would therefore persevere in a religious life, it is necessary to start right—with a new heart. Let your prayer ever be, "Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. 51 : 10. You may send a ball by an external power, but when its force is spent, it stops. It has no inherent power to go on, but a bird has power within itself to propel itself on.

Sometimes I have observed young men in their single days very regular in their attendance at Sunday school and public worship. Scarcely ever do they miss an

appointment. But their hearts are not always set upon Christ and His statutes, but sometimes upon some person. They are attentive, because those to whom they are devoted are attentive. We too often conclude that if young people are devoted to the Sunday school and church before marriage, they certainly will be after marriage. But in not a few cases we have been doomed to disappointment. No sooner is the "honey moon" passed and the newly married couple settled down in life, than we observe a slackening up in their attendance. In most cases it is not the fault of the wife, but of the husband. He now seems to be less interested in church-going, and by degrees soon becomes only an occasional attendant. Why is this lack in Sunday school and church-going? Ah, it is plain. Once he attended with an object in view, the wooing and securing of his bride; now, as this object has been gained, the Sunday school and church have no charm for him.

While the Sunday school and the church are certainly the best places to find a good

companion, we should not make this the highest and only object. Our primary object in attending such places should be the honor and glory of Christ, and the salvation of the soul. And we should allow wooing and courtship as incidental to these higher interests. Nothing is so lovely and loving as two pious hearts walking together to the sanctuary of God. Their communion must be sweet and heavenly. But why not continue that heavenly journey through married life? If they together walked in single blessedness and innocency, should they not in wedded life as sincere worshippers kneel at the same shrine, and after this life together walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem which is above? What is more beautiful than a young Christian home sanctified by Christian grace. Oh, think of this, my dear children. Be sure to carry your religion with you wherever you go and into whatever relation you form. Many a poor neglected wife exclaims with bitter feelings, "John, you used to go with me to the

church. Why do you refuse to do so now ? Do you love me less now ?” If I pity a woman next to a drunkard’s wife, it is that Christian woman who has a heathen for her husband. What comfort can such a cold-hearted man be to her ? He has no sympathy or interest in that which is most sacred to her. But that woman is to be congratulated who has a pious and religious husband—a man who fears and serves the Lord.

He may be a poor man and obliged to eat his bread in the sweat of his face, but he has sentiments, sympathies and a spirit that are in harmony with hers. They read out of the same Bible ; kneel at the same altar, and are moved by the same spirit. Persons seeking companions for life cannot be too careful in heeding the admonition of Paul, “ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers : for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ?” 2 Cór. 6 : 14.

Again, many young people make a profession of religion and seem to be sincere,

but when they enter upon the stern realities of life and great responsibilities rest upon their shoulders, they sometimes become so absorbed with their daily duties and cares as to lose their former interest in religion, and by degrees they sink into worldliness. As their hands become callous, their hearts also become hard. Our Savior refers to this class in His parable of the sower. "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." Matth. 13 : 22. As the children of Israel easily fell into idolatry, so it is easy sometimes for professing Christians to fall into the idolatry of this world. The human mind is carnal and easily pursues carnal things. To check this tendency of the human heart, which is so common, our Savior asks the important question, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Mark 8 : 36, 37. This perverted tendency of human nature has led many into the love and worship of riches, which is almost certain to insure the loss of the soul. "Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Mark 10 : 24, 25. How important it is that we heed the solemn admonition of Paul to Timothy, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." 1 Tim. 6 : 9, 10, 11. Many young people make a profession of religion and seem to start out well, but they are soon led

astray by the vanities and pleasures of this world. While the religion of Jesus Christ does not countenance sinful pleasures, it does not deprive its subjects from lawful pleasures. On the contrary, it affords them the highest order of pleasure—that in which God and the good delight. Solomon, speaking of divine wisdom, says, “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” Prov. 3 : 17.

David says, “A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” Ps. 84 : 10. The religion of Jesus Christ affords the highest intellectual, social and spiritual pleasure. There is something grand and beautiful in holding communion with God, in the study of His Holy Word, and in the fellowship of saints. If drinking at the stream of human knowledge is pleasant, what must be the pleasure in going to the Fountain Head of all wisdom.—Concerning the truly blessed man, David says, “His

delight is in the law of the Lord ; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season : his leaf also shall not wither ; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

Ps. 1 : 2, 3. There is something charming in the music of nature, but sacred music alone will lift the soul godward and heavenward, and inspire it with true devotion to its Maker.

There is some real pleasure in communing with God. If the Queen of Sheba experienced pleasure in communing with Solomon of all that was in her heart (1 Kings 10 : 2), what must be the pleasure of communing of all that is in our hearts with One who is greater than Solomon. Too many professed Christians whose hearts are not sufficiently sanctified by God's truth and Spirit, are often led astray by that which is apparently sinless pleasure. They seem to be unable to make the distinction between sinful and sinless pleasure—between harm-

ful and harmless pleasure. Where these two classes of pleasure meet, they seem so near alike that their moral character is hard to detect. The Missouri and the Columbia Rivers take their origin on the Rocky Mountains. Their sources are so near to each other that a breath of air consigns a falling drop to one or the other river. And yet how vastly different their destinies. The one river empties into the calm Pacific and the other in the stormy Atlantic. So harmful and harmless pleasures seem nearly alike, but they flow in opposite directions and lead to vastly different destinies. The devil in his temptations assumes the appearance of an angel of light. He does not at first reveal his true character, or the true character of the pleasures he uses to beguile the unwary into a sinful path and life. The angler conceals the fatal hook beneath the seemingly delicious bait. So the devil uses pleasures that are apparently innocent and inoffensive to delude his victims.

Playing cards without stakes is a pleasant game. It is apparently no crime. The

taste for card playing is fostered. It becomes a great pleasure. Reputation is at first put up, then some article of value, and gambling is the result. There is apparently no harm in tripping the floor at a social gathering. The taste is fostered. It becomes a great pleasure. It is no longer confined to the social gathering. Next comes the dancing hall and then the ball. Many a promising church member has been drawn away from Christ and the Church and the society of the good by this alluring process. As church members become interested in the dance, they lose interest in the Church and religion generally. And in not a few instances they wreck their immortal souls.

It is in the same way that the devil makes drunkards. He first comes with tobacco. While this is a filthy habit, he denies that there is any moral wrong in it. Then comes in order the occasional social glass, and then the regular glass, and finally the habitual drunkenness, which is followed by misery, woe and death.

Children, if you would persevere in a godly life, you must learn the difference between innocent and sinful pleasures, the good and the evil. How solemn the warning of the prophet, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." Isa. 5: 20. May every one of you be able to say, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Ps. 119: 105.

Some start out well in the religious life, but they tire and become weary in well doing. They do not regard the exhortation of Paul, "And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Gal. 6: 9. I believe there is such a thing as spending our religious force. The engine will soon spend its force, if it is not replenished with new fuel. The horse will soon become weak, if not fed. And man will soon physically become feeble, if he does not regularly partake of food. In like manner our spiritual life and

strength must be sustained—nourished and renewed. This is effected by the use of the means of grace as the study of God's Word, prayer and the use of the sacraments. Our Savior said to satan, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matth.

4: 4. As our material bodies are nourished by food, so our souls are nourished by the Word of God. Prayer is a means of communion with God and of securing His blessings. Prayer is a grace-bearing ordinance. When Luther had some important task to perform, he was accustomed to say, "I cannot get through with this task with less than three hours of prayer." And our Savior said to His disciples, "Without me ye can do nothing." John 15: 5.

The Christian life is not one of ease, but of activity. It requires exertion. It is a race to run, and a warfare. The Christian is exhorted to diligence in these terms: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor

device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Ecc. 9: 10. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. 2: 12, 13. But we must remember that God works in us through the means of grace. We must use these means as the study of His Word, prayer and acts of worship. This is the condition of God working in us to do His pleasure, or of furnishing us with the grace to persevere.

Against the church in Sardis the angel wrote, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Rev. 3: 1. That church undoubtedly was never alive, or else being alive once, it permitted itself to die through the neglect of the use of the necessary means.

As it is getting late, we will adjourn and resume our pleasant conversation to-morrow evening, God willing. I hope you will not forget the subject of this evening's conversation. It is of the greatest importance that

a young Christian perseveres in his religious duties.

Good night, my dear children. Do not forget to say your prayers and ask God's blessing upon one another. Do not forget your parents and your grandfather in your prayers.

CHAPTER VII.

Fort Kindness.

Well, children, it seems that you are becoming every night more interested in our conversation. Before we proceed to the topic for this evening, we will have a little experience meeting. We will allow you to give your experience on our last subject, which was Perseverance.

David said, "This morning papa told me to plaster the corn. I did not do like a boy who plastered the ends of the rows and left his father under the impression that he plastered the whole field. But I went right through from one end of the rows to the other, and I persevered until the whole field of corn was plastered."

That was right, my boy. You held the fort by persevering in your task until it was accomplished.

And Amy, in what did you persevere to-day?

“Well, grandpa,” said Amy, “I wanted to go to our neighbors to-day where they have a little girl. I asked mamma to let me go, but she thought I had better stay at home. So I continued asking permission to go, and I gave her no rest until she let me go.”

Well, Amy, that was perseverance indeed, but not the right kind of perseverance. Paul says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.” Eph. 6: 1. Your perseverance was disobedience. I fear it was in the cause of satan and not in the interest of your parents, much less in the interest of God. There is such a thing as fighting against God. Christ wants us to persevere only in what is right. Solomon says, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man: but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Prov. 14: 12.

I have often seen children persevere in what was wrong and foolish. Be sure that

instead of fighting on the Lord's side, you do not fight against Him. We are to persevere in that only which is right, and not in that which is wrong.

And Walter, in what did you persevere to-day?

"I persevered in doing my duties. Papa told me a number of things that he wanted me to do, as digging garden, planting cabbage, cutting wood, and going to the mill. As soon as I had performed one duty, I commenced another until my work for the day was finished."

You were indeed persevering. You certainly carried out Paul's instruction, "Be not slothful in business." Rom. 12: 11. This is the kind of perseverance that is required in living a Christian life. We are not to persevere in a few duties only, but in all duties, those of less importance as well as those of greater importance. I am glad that you are trying to practice what you hear.

Now let us consider the subject for this

evening—Fort Kindness. One of the principles of the Christian religion is kindness. “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.” Rom. 12: 10. “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” Matth. 5: 7. Now God wants all His children to be kind; to protect and hold fast this great principle of His kingdom. Every boy and girl, man and woman, can help to defend this principle of the Christian religion by being kind. This world is cold and selfish. In this world every one seems to be for himself.

There are many in this world who feel friendless. No one seems to sympathize with them, to speak kindly to them, or do them any acts of kindness. Christ has taught us that kindness is a principle of His religion. We are to practice this Christian principle, and in so doing we counteract the selfishness of this wicked world. Christ in His own life gave us the best example of kindness. It is written of Him, “For ye

know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8: 9. His whole life of suffering on earth was vicarious—the innocent for the guilty. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Is. 53: 4, 5.

Now, children, I can tell you a number of ways in which you can be kind. Learn to be kind at home to your parents. By doing what they command you to do, is only obedience. But by doing those favors which they do not ask, but which is a great help to them, is kindness. Thus to carry in wood when you see the wood-box empty, is kindness. To assist your mother without being asked at the wash tub, in the kitchen, and in keeping the house in order, is kindness. That girl who never voluntarily turns her hand to help her overburdened mother, but

thinks that she was born to be a lady and her mother a servant, that girl, I say, is unkind, cruel, and, I am almost tempted to say, a domestic nuisance. A kind daughter will be helpful to her mother.

A son, too, can be kind to his father in many ways—by being ready to run errands, cutting wood, taking the cows to pasture, and by cheerfully helping his tired father do the chores. Thus kindness is shown in little acts done cheerfully.

When your parents are starting out on a journey, bring your papa's cane, hat, arctics and assist him put on his overcoat. Bring your mamma's wraps and assist her to put them on. Try to make your parents comfortable. Assist them into the carriage, and tuck in the robes, so that they may be comfortable. And as the carriage departs, express your good wishes for a pleasant journey, a happy time and a safe return. These are little things, but they are kindnesses which your parents will highly appreciate. If your parents return by railroad,

it is kindness to meet them at the station. If they return by private conveyance, meet them at the gate. Help them to alight from the carriage, take care of the team and carry in their baggage. Help them to remove their wraps, and, if it is cold, have a good fire. Manifest an interest in their comfort. Show by these little courtesies that you love your parents. Be kind to your associates. I know a boy whom everybody loved because he was kind to every one. He always had a smile and a kind word for every one whom he met; it mattered not whether the person was a little boy or girl, an aged man or woman, rich or poor. He was so kind and cheerful that his very presence seemed to give warmth and sunshine to all. If he had an apple or orange, he was sure to divide it with his associates. If he had a kite, they were allowed to fly it. If he had a ball and bat, they were invited to use them. When his father gave him a pair of skates, he often allowed those associates who had none to use them.

If he met a person overburdened with luggage, he would offer his assistance. In winter he would often chop wood and make paths through the snow for the poor and aged. He indeed had a kind look, word and act for every one.

While young, this boy was prostrated with a severe attack of fever which terminated fatally. It was no unusual thing to hear persons say, "He was too good to live." I do not feel like saying this of him, for the best of God's creatures on this earth come far short of His glory. But I know his funeral was largely attended. All present mingled their tears over the departure of one who was kind to all and was loved by all. That boy did much for his Master in manifesting His spirit. He preached Christ in his kind looks, words and acts. He, like his divine Master, did much to cheer and comfort mankind in this cold and selfish world. Sweet is his blessed memory. His smiles, cheerful words and kind acts will not soon be forgotten.

We all know the difference between a neighbor who is kind and obliging, and one who is selfish and unkind. The one feels concerned for others. He visits the sick, helps the poor, counsels the erring, lends to them that would borrow, and renders assistance to those who need it. He is a useful man in the neighborhood. He seems to live not so much for himself as for others. When such an one departs this life, the community feels that it has lost a true benefactor, and many sincere tears of sorrow and grief are shed over his departure. All feel that a good man has gone to his eternal rest and reward. The memory of such a man lingers long in the minds of those who knew him and loved him.

Not so with the selfish man. He is cold in his manners, cold in his looks, and cold in his greetings. He has no pleasant smile, no kind word, or good act for any one. He lives for himself alone and does not seem to be concerned for any one except for himself and his family. He neither visits the sick,

or aids the poor, or assists the overburdened. He is cold, selfish and narrow-minded. When he dies, the community does not feel that it has sustained any loss by his death. He is neither missed nor mourned over. The community needs no comfort as far as his death is concerned, but is rather to be congratulated; as the fewer of such citizens it has, the better off it is. The officiating minister knows the people need no comfort, and hence offers them none; but in language well understood, he urges the living to live unto Christ and minister to their fellowmen in love, and kindness and sympathy. The grave of this cold and selfish man is neglected by the living. He cared not for them when alive, and they are unmindful of him when dead. The most suitable epitaph for his tombstone is, "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass." Jer. 22: 19. "Unwept, unhonored and unsung."

Now, children, I want you all to be kind. Be kind to the domestic animals: the cat,

dog, cow and horse. Be kind to one another, to your parents, to your playmates and to your neighbors. Kindness is a great principle of the Christian religion, and every child of God should faithfully cherish and practice it. Christ wants you all to hold this fort. As it is growing late, we will close our conversation for this evening, and I bid you all good night.

CHAPTER VIII.

Fort Faith.

Dear children, it is gratifying to meet you in this pleasant conference. I certainly enjoy the conversation as much as you seem to do. How many put to practice the lesson taught last night? (All hands go up.)

Well, Amy, what act of kindness did you do?

"I had a play dinner," said Amy, "and I invited four of my little playmates, and I divided my little pie and cake with them. They enjoyed them so much, saying that they did not get such nice things at home."

And David, what kind act did you do?

"I chopped some wood for old Mrs. Park."

And Charity, what kind act did you do?

"I visited old blind Mrs. Smith and read the Bible to her."

And Walter, what did you do to hold Fort Kindness?

“I gave a quarter of a dollar to help buy a horse for poor Mr. Cold, who lost his a few days ago.”

Well, I am glad that you all can recall some noble act of kindness. Stand by this Christian principle and you will honor your blessed Master who in all kindness came to minister to mankind.

The subject for this evening's conversation is Fort Faith. This is a great principle of the Christian religion. If you will read the 11th chapter of Paul to the Hebrews, you will learn much of this Christian grace. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Heb. 11 : 6. God wants us all to exercise faith and not cast away our confidence.

There are many different kinds of faith ; but we may arrange them into two general classes : natural faith and religious faith.

Natural faith is a principle common to all mankind and exercised by all. The artificer exercises this principle in the construction of a house. He first believes that

he can build it and then acts upon his faith. There could be no invention without this same principle. The inventor first believes in his theory, and then reduces that theory to practice by constructing the required instrument. Columbus exercised this principle in the discovery of America. He believed that there was a country west, and then proceeded to discover it. The farmer exercises this faith in farming. He believes that if he plows and sows, he will receive a crop. Thus, too, the common laborer exercises this same principle. He believes that if he labors for his employer, he will be compensated. In buying and in selling, we must exercise this faith in mankind. We make social and business engagements with one another upon the strength of our mutual confidence. Children are continually exercising this principle in the confidence they bestow upon their parents.

Natural faith is the mainspring of human activity. Without it there could be no social engagements or business transactions.

In this event, every one would act for himself alone. And this certainly would be a strange world if its inhabitants had no social or business relations.

As natural faith is so essential to our well-being in this life, we should sacredly guard this great boon. We should be careful not to abuse the confidence that others have reposed in us, but, prove ourselves worthy of it. Nor should we withhold our confidence in them. Thus the soldier should have confidence in his commander, the client in his attorney, the scholar in his teacher, the laborer in his employer, the servant in his master, and children in their parents. We should all hold on to this mutual confidence in mankind as the basis of all our social and business relations.

But I wish to speak more especially about religious faith. It is sometimes called "saving faith," evangelic faith and "precious faith." Like natural faith, in its nature it is confidence. It differs, however, from the former in its origin and objects. Its origin

is the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Rom. 10 : 17. In Gal. 5 : 22 we are told that one of the fruits of the spirit is faith. The Holy Spirit accompanies God's Word, read or preached, enlightens the mind, and influences it to accept the revealed truth. The human mind is thus by the Holy Spirit influenced to confide in God, His promises, and His Son as the only Savior. Thus the same human mind that is active in natural faith, is led to move in another and higher sphere. In the one case the mind and heart move in the sphere of the natural and material world ; in the other case they move in the spiritual kingdom of grace, which Christ has established on earth for the salvation of mankind.

Children, you cannot be too thankful for your pious parents. From early childhood, God's Word has been read and explained to you. It has been your privilege also to attend Sunday school and religious services

in the sanctuary. You, too, have been made the subject of many prayers at home, in the Sunday school and church. These are divinely appointed means. The Holy Spirit through these means has enlightened your mind and by degrees you have accepted the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, and, I trust, you are now in possession of saving faith. As you grow older and continue in the use of the means of grace, your faith will develop and become stronger. Now this holy confidence in God, His Word and His Son, which has thus been produced in your tender hearts, you must not cast away, or allow satan to destroy by his wicked thoughts of unbelief. Let me illustrate a few circumstances under which your faith will be tried.

You have been taught that it is your duty to pray, and that God is a prayer-hearing God. It is because you have this faith that you pray. The devil will try to break up this good habit of praying. If he can destroy your faith in God as a prayer-hearing

God, he will stop your praying. To accomplish the former, he will suggest such thoughts as these to your mind: "God is too far off to be heard. He is too great to be concerned with His insignificant creatures on earth." You can resist this great tempter, as our Savior did in the wilderness, by quoting Scripture to him. When he suggests the thought that God is too far off to be heard, read the following: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Ps. 139: 7, 9, 10. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." Jer. 23: 24. "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matth. 6: 6.

When satan suggests to your mind that God is too great to concern himself about you, call to mind such passages as this : “ Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” Matth. 10 : 29—31. If satan suggests doubts as to whether God will heed your prayers, call to mind the promise which the Savior himself made, “ Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” Matth. 7 : 7, 8. Study much what the Bible says about prayer, and this will greatly strengthen your faith in it. Make trial of God and learn by experience that He indeed is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God. This is what David did, and he has given us his testimony in these beautiful words, “ I love the Lord, because he

hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." Ps. 116: 1, 2. The reason some cease to keep up the good habit of praying is this, they allow satan to destroy their faith in prayer. Beware of the evil suggestions of this tempter.

It is said that prayer moves the arm that moves the world. It is the greatest power that the Christian can wield. Do not allow satan to despoil you of it by thoughts of unbelief.

"Grandpa," said Charity, "what does this passage mean, 'And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear'?" Isa. 65: 24.

It means this, God foreseeing our prayers, often answers them in advance.

"Does God always answer our prayers?" asks Howard.

He always hears our prayers if we are sincere, but He does not always grant our

requests. We are sometimes like little children and ask for things which would not be good for us, and hence God often in his infinite goodness withholds the objects of our petitions. Sometimes, too, God answers our prayers in a way we do not expect. If He does not remove the burden, He will give us strength to bear it ; if He does not remove the affliction, He will give us grace and patience to endure it.

“Grandpa,” asks David, “do you think we can remove mountains by prayer?”

It is true our Savior said, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place ; and it shall be removed ; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.”

Matth. 17 : 20. But we are not to take this passage in a literal sense. I once heard of an elderly lady before whose residence was a mount which obstructed her view to the valley beyond. — One evening before retiring she recalled this passage and prayed that the mount might be removed. As soon

as she arose in the morning, she went to the window to see if the mount had really disappeared. Seeing that it was still there, she exclaimed, "*Just as I expected!*" The fact that she did not expect to find it removed, proved that she had little or no faith, much less the "faith as a grain of mustard seed."

We must take this passage in a figurative sense. The mustard seed is very small, but planted, it rapidly grows into a tree large enough to harbor birds. So if we have faith, however small its beginning, and we foster it so that it grows and becomes strong, we will be able to remove mountains of trouble and difficulty. Not a few Christians who have been called upon to endure great trials and difficulties, have repeatedly experienced the truthfulness of this declaration of our Lord, concerning the removal of mountains by faith. It is the prayer of faith that triumphs over difficulties and prevails with God. If satan could destroy this faith, he would cut off the very means of support to the Christian's life. The poet truthfully says :

“Prayer was appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give ;
Long as they live should Christians pray,
For only while they pray, they live.”

Satan will try to undermine your faith in the providence of God. . You have been taught that God is not only the creator of all things and the governor of the universe, but that His providence extends to all His creatures, and especially to those who love Him. It is really interesting to trace the hand of divine providence in Old Testament history, and especially in the lives of many of its noted characters, as : Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. With no less clearness can the historian trace the hand of providence in the history of nations, in the rise and fall of empires, the preceding being always preparatory to the succeeding. Our own country affords one of the finest displays of God's providence. This country was discovered at a time when the Old World needed a New World to colonize, and where her new faith and energies might de-

velop. The hilly region of the east was first settled, and then the more arable lands lying westward. Had the level lands of the middle and western states been settled first, the rough country of the east would not have been utilized to the present extent.

Who stored away for this and succeeding generations the rich deposits of iron, coal, oil, silver and gold, if not a God of Providence? How opportune were these discoveries. When iron was most needed, then came the discovery of its vast deposits. As fuel became more in demand, then came the discovery of vast beds of coal. When gold and silver seemed most needed to place our youthful nation on a substantial basis, then came the discovery of these precious metals. When there was a demand for more and better means of illumination, then came the discovery of oil and gas. God foreseeing the future exigencies of this nation long before it was born, stored away these valuable minerals, and when they were needed, He opened to man these great magazines of

nature. This great, good and wise provision of nature for man's wants should convince the most incredulous mind that there is a divine providence.

Any one who will carefully review his own life, will see very plainly the hand of providence in directing the affairs and events of his life. The events of one's life are like the links that are united into a chain. If one link were to be missing, the chain would be incomplete ; so if one event of our life were missing, the life chain would be incomplete. As the weaver takes dark and bright colored yarns and so blends them that they are woven into one beautiful fabric, so God takes our dark and bright experiences, our prosperities and our adversities, our sickness and health, our joys and our sorrows, and weaves them into a beautiful Christian life. It is a grand as well as a comforting thought that our lives and the events of our lives are in God's hand, and that He will overrule them for His glory and our good.

Joseph must descend into the pit and dungeon, before he can ascend to great eminence in Pharaoh's kingdom. Moses must be in exile before he can become the leader of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. Job must be stripped of his herds, his servants and his children, and be covered with loathsome sores, before he can enter into and enjoy a subsequent state that was far better than his first state. Poor John Milton must be blind before God will open his spiritual vision to *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. John Bunyan must be cast into prison before he can be inspired to write the *Pilgrim's Progress*. The path to eminence and greatness leads through trials, suffering and disappointments. Such are the leadings of divine providence. David, who understood the shepherd life and who felt that he was under the care of his heavenly Father, could say from actual experience, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters." Ps. 23: 1, 2.

It is a comforting thought that we are in the hands of an Almighty Friend, and whatever may befall us in this life, He will overrule for His glory and our good. Now satan will try to rob you of this comfort by undermining your faith in God's providence. He may even point you to the wicked and say, God does no more for you than for them. He may even quote Scripture to you as he did to Christ in the wilderness, and say, "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matth. 5 : 45. He will point you to some wicked men and say : "Have you not noticed that they have good crops, good health in their families, and are growing in wealth, while many of those who profess to be Christians are less favored. Their crops are often poor. They have much sickness in their families. They do not seem to get along well in this world." Thus by disparaging insinuations, he will try to undermine your faith in divine providence. Thus

he tried to overthrow David's faith in God's providence. It was this that led him to say : " Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world ; they increase in riches. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me ; until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places ; thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment ! they are utterly consumed with terrors." Ps. 73 : 12—19. To be prosperous is to stand in slippery places.

The goodness of God should lead men to repentance, but in too many cases it is made an occasion for indifference. Worldly prosperity is something that any one who is concerned for the eternal welfare of his soul, should not covet. The danger of worldly prosperity is repeatedly pointed out in the Holy Scriptures : " The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." Matth.

13 : 22. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"

Mark 10 : 23. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of an needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

Mark 10 : 25. How salutary is the advice of Paul to Timothy : "The love of money is the root of all evil ; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things ; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." 1 Tim. 6 : 10, 11,

Afflictions in this life are not always evidences of God's displeasure. They may be blessings in disguise. Many a parent has been drawn to heaven by his child preceding him there. Many a man has by the loss of worldly goods learned the vanity of all things on earth, and was led to lay up treasures in heaven, "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Many a

prodigal son has been overtaken with sickness, and led to reflect, repent and exclaim : "Blessed is the man whom thou chasteneth, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law." Ps. 94 : 12. It was the strong conviction of this truth that enabled Paul to say, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Rom. 8 : 28.

Satan would have you discard the directing hand of God. Cut loose from God, you would be like a vessel without either anchor or compass. The prophet Jeremiah says, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jer. 10 : 23. Solomon, the man of wisdom, says, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Prov. 28 : 26.

Hold on to the great doctrine of God's providence. Put yourselves under God's protection, care and at His disposal. Luther in times of temptation was accustomed to

say, "Let us sing a hymn and drive away the devil." So when he tempts you to doubt God's providence, drive him and his evil thoughts away by singing the inspiring hymn :

"He leadeth me! oh, blessed thought,
Oh! words with heavenly comfort fraught;
Whate'er I do, whate'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me."

Satan will try to destroy your faith in Christ as your only Savior. Our salvation is conditioned by our faith. This is clearly and repeatedly taught in the Scriptures: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16: 31. A man might know the whole Bible, and be acquainted with all its essential facts, and yet not have saving faith. There are many who know their duty, but do not do it. The patient might know the remedy for his disease, but as long as he does not apply it, this knowledge will do him no good. Too many assent to the truth, but are not sensibly impressed by it. Nor is merely believ-

ing the fact that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of mankind, saving faith. Saving faith is the act of appropriating that of which we have a knowledge and in which we believe. Thus saving faith not only believes the truth, but also appropriates that truth. It not only believes in the Bible, but also appropriates its promises. It not only believes in God, but also apprehends Him as the only true object of worship. It not only believes in Christ as the only Savior, but appropriates Him as such. Job uses the language of appropriation when he says, "I know that my redeemer liveth." Mary at the sepulchre said to the angels, "They have taken away my Lord." And doubting Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord, and my God."

There is a great difference between believing *in* Christ and believing *on* Christ. The miner, when he looks at the rope overhanging the yawning shaft and considers it safe, simply believes *in* the rope; but when he lays hold of that rope with his two hands

and swings away from the earth and trusts his life to that rope alone, then he believes *on* the rope. Many a one is willing to stand by an open mine shaft and say, "I believe the rope is strong enough to support me," but not every one has the courage to lay hold of that rope, and swinging from good footing, depend upon it alone. So is it with saving faith. Many have a knowledge of Christ and believe *in* the truthfulness of His mission to earth as the Savior of mankind. But how few, comparatively speaking, really believe *on* Him as their only Savior. Our Savior declared while on earth that "many are called, but few are chosen." We fear that the most common error of professing Christians is that they regard the mere knowledge of Christ and the mere belief in Him as a Savior to be sufficient, instead of trusting and relying on His merits alone for salvation. It takes some courage to believe *on* Christ; to cut oneself entirely loose from all human merit, and trust entirely to the merit of Christ.

How many are unconsciously depending only partly on Christ, and almost wholly upon their own works for salvation! Such really build upon a sandy foundation instead of on Christ, the Rock. To depend for salvation upon our baptism, confirmation, profession, or our works, is not building upon Christ. While all these are important factors of the Christian life, they are not Christ, nor can they take His place. Salvation is not of works, but of grace. To guard us from the fatal rock upon which so many make shipwreck of their souls, the apostles have sounded their alarm: "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. 3: 20. "Neither is salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4: 12. Again, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves." 2 Cor. 13: 5.

It is an unpleasant thing to be disappointed under any ordinary circumstance.

But who can form a conception of that eternal chagrin and horror which some will experience at the last great day. They will then discover the great mistake which they made for eternity. When the deluge comes at the end of the world, they will discover that they had taken shelter upon a craft of their own making; and not in the true ark. When the storm comes and beats upon their house, they will discover that it is not built upon the Rock of Ages, but upon the sand; and it will fall, and great will be the fall. When the King comes in to see the guests, He will discover that they have not the wedding garments, the perfect righteousness of Christ; but are clothed in their own filthy rags of self-righteousness. How terrible will be the disappointment and condemnation when the sentence of banishment is uttered: "Bind him hand and feet, and take him away, and cast him in outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." Matth. 22: 13, 14. What a

solemn scene is given in Matth. 7 : 21—23 :
“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name ? and in thy name have cast out devils ? and in thy name done many wonderful works ? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you : depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Remember that professing and possessing are two different things. To profess our mere faith in Christ is one thing, but to appropriate Him by saving faith is quite a different thing—it is the all-essential thing for the Christian.

“Grandpa,” asks Walter, “what does this passage of Scripture mean, ‘Faith without works is dead’ ?” James 2 : 20.

I am glad you referred to this passage. A tree that has life will manifest that life in its fruit, but if it bears no fruit, it indicates that it is dead. The fruit is not the life of the tree, but only the result and proof of

this life. So good works are not faith, but the evidence of faith. And where there are no works, the faith is dead. Hence to profess to believe that God is the only true God and not to worship Him, is a dead faith. To acknowledge the Bible as the inspired Word of God and not to study and obey it, is dead faith. To acknowledge that Jesus is the only true Savior and not to seek Him, is faith without works—a dead faith.

In the Christian life faith and works must go together. In a team of two horses, both must pull together. If the off horse pulls and the near horse holds back, it will be a poor draft. A pious old patriarch who was a ferryman in the highlands of Scotland was so impressed with the importance of faith and works going together that he inscribed on the one oar of his boat "Faith," and on the other oar "Works." If any passengers wished an explanation and desired to know the relation of faith to works, he would take up oar faith and try to row alone with it; but the boat would only turn

around and around without advancing. Then laying faith down, he took up the oar works and tried to row alone with it; but this effort was attended with no better success. Then taking up both faith and works and applying them vigorously, the little boat soon shot across the lake. He thus taught the importance of faith and works going together. Is not this the secret of success in all departments of industry? The farmer believes that it is God that giveth the increase, but he himself must plow and sow. The mechanic believes that a certain article can be made. He couples his energies with his faith, and the article is produced.

“Grandpa,” said Charity, “I think I now see why it is necessary to unite work with faith. To-day I had a hard lesson in history. I believed that I could get the lesson, but the mere believing this would not get the lesson. I went to work and studied hard, and succeeded.”

Yes, my child, you are right. We must first have faith and then go to work in the

faithful use of the means that God has given us for the accomplishment of certain ends. If you have saving faith in Christ, it will show itself. You will think much about your Savior, you will serve Him, and will be willing to make sacrifices for Him and His cause. The fact that so many professed Christians pray and read their Bible so seldom, are so irregular in their attendance upon the means of grace, and take so little interest in the prayer meeting, the Sunday school, and the missionary enterprises of the Church, is an indication that they have little or no true saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Do not allow satan by his evil suggestions of unbelief to destroy your faith in prayer, Providence, or in Christ, your only Savior. Faith is the key to the whole situation. If satan can capture Fort Faith, he will capture all the other strongholds of Christ's kingdom on earth. But we have the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church. Therefore take courage.

CHAPTER IX.

Fort Temperance.

Now, children, our evening talks which have been so pleasant to me and apparently both enjoyable and instructive to you, would not be complete without a plain talk upon the subject of Temperance. This is one of the greatest questions of our age and country. There never was a time when so much interest was manifested in this subject as at present. It has become an individual, a social, a political, and a national question; and it is fast becoming a Church question. Every individual has the question thrust upon him, and he must either bravely stand his ground in its defence, or flee like an unprincipled coward. The great question of temperance is thrust upon society, and it must take a stand either for or against it. In some localities society has already deci-

ded the question in favor of temperance, while in other localities the struggle between the opposing sentiments is still raging. Political parties dare not tamper with this question any longer. Heretofore the temperance cause has been used like a foot-ball between the old political parties; kicked from one side to the other as might best subserve their political intrigues. It certainly is no credit to any political party to profess publicly to be the friend of the cause of temperance and then secretly thrust a dagger at it. The treachery of such a political policy cannot exist long or command the respect of honorable citizens. That political party which not only professes temperance, but *possesses* real temperance, will eventually decide the great question.

The Church, which hitherto has tamely treated the subject of temperance as a mere Christian virtue and quietly recommended its practice, dare no longer ignore temperance as the great moral and religious issue of our age. Its synods, conferences and

assemblies dare not pass it by in silence. These ecclesiastical bodies are therefore giving their deliverance upon the great temperance question. They are obliged thus to define their position on this issue. It is gratifying to read their positive action which is usually taken in the form of strong temperance resolutions. The time is fast coming when every minister of the Gospel must publicly define his position on the temperance question. He must either fall in rank with the temperance movement, or suffer the odium his doubtful course entails upon him. All over the land and in almost every denomination, ministers who ten years ago were indifferent to this subject, and who said that temperance was a political matter and should not be mentioned in the pulpit lest it give offence, are now coming out boldly on the side of temperance as the great moral and national evil of our day. They denounce in the strongest terms not only intemperance as a great evil, but also those who in any way encourage it. The cry

along the ministerial rank is, Forward, onward, ye Christian heralds of the cross.

“Grandpa,” asks David, “I hear people talk so much about intemperance; does the Bible say anything about it?”

Yes, the Bible says much on this important subject, and as the Bible is our highest authority, we will consider what it says. The priests were forbidden to drink wine. In Lev. 10: 8—11 we read, “And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put a difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.” Strong drink deranges a man’s mind so that he does not make a difference between holy and unholy things, between the clean and unclean, the right and the

wrong, the good and the evil. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord, and were consumed. It is probable that they were drunk and offered it in drunken mockery.

The prophets were not to use intoxicating drink. "The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment." Isaiah 28. 7. It was the duty of the prophet to apprehend the visions of the Lord correctly, and to execute wise and just judgment among the people. But this he could not do when intoxicated. The drunken man errs in vision. He sees things in their wrong light. To him a moving shadow on the wall is a sporting demon, a moving wagon on the highway is a train of cars, and the eternal hills are moving clouds. To him the world is upside down. The drunken man errs also in judgment. If there is no fuel with which to build a fire, no food to feed the family, no clothes to

protect the children, and no peace in the home, whom does the drunken husband and father blame? Does he blame his own drunkenness—the true cause of this misery and wretchedness? No, he errs in judgment. He casts the blame upon his poor suffering wife, his neglected children, his innocent neighbors, and not unfrequently upon “bad luck.”

In Prov. 31 : 4, 5, kings and princes are exhorted to abstain from wine and strong drink : “ It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine ; nor for princes strong drink : Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.” Kings and princes are called upon to discharge responsible duties for the people. But they cannot do this properly when under the influence of wine. What a lesson is this for politicians. No man is competent for any civil office who drinks. No candidate with the scent of strong drink upon his breath should be sustained.

In Prov. 20 : 1 we are warned against the use of strong drink, because it mocks mankind and enrages the passions : “ Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging : whoso is deceived thereby is not wise.” It mocks the fondest expectations a father may have of his promising son. It deceives the confidence of a loving mother. We see this mocking in the degradation of Noah, in the incest of Lot, in the strange fire of Nadab and Abihu, and in the apostacy of the priests and prophets of Israel and Judah. We see it in the long and shameful debauchery of Solomon, in the overthrow of king Belshazzar, and in the wreck of Herod. In our day thousands of the most talented and promising are led away by its deceptions.

In Prov. 23 : 29 we have six miseries of intemperance given in the form of questions : “ Who hath woe ? who hath sorrow ? who hath contentions ? who hath babbling ? who hath wounds without cause ? who hath redness of eyes ?” The answer is given in the next verse, “ They that tarry long at the

wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." Hence we have the solemn admonition given, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright." Prov. 23: 31. Eve tarried and looked at the forbidden fruit. She was tempted, and fell. So many tarry at the hotel and look upon the wine when it is red, and fall. "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Prov. 23: 32. A serpent's bite is treacherous and poisonous. The sting of the adder is painful and fatal. How many poor deluded souls experience the sting of intemperance. What must be the feeling of a man who through intemperance has lost his character, his earthly possessions, as home and farm, and has entailed untold miseries upon his once happy family. What must be the feeling of that man who through intemperance has lost hope of heaven, for we read, "Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. 6: 10.

In Prov. 23 : 35 we read, "They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick ; they have beaten me, and I felt it not : when shall I awake ? I will seek it yet again." The man in the gutter has been beaten and bruised, but at the time was unconscious of it. Gradually he becomes sober, but immediately resorts to his cup and continues his debauchery. Is not this a scene of daily occurrence in almost every town and city ?

God solemnly denounces those who give intoxicating drinks to others. We read in Hab. 2 : 15, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken." What must be the condemnation of those who set out the bottle of strong drink to their fellow-men, or who lead the unguarded to the bar of death. Are they not guilty of murder in the first degree, and guilty of breaking the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" ? What will be the condemnation of the reputed good citizen and church member (?)

who signs a petition to secure a license to sell this destroyer of body and soul to his fellowmen? Is he less responsible than the bartender for the misery and crime there produced? Will his condemnation be less?

“Grandpa,” asked Charity, “is intemperance a crime?”

In order to answer this question we will turn to Webster’s unabridged dictionary and learn what constitutes crime. He gives three definitions of crime: 1.) Any violation of law, either divine or human. 2.) Any aggravated offence against morality or the public welfare. 3.) That which occasions crime. Intemperance is a crime in this three-fold sense.

Intemperance is a destroyer of peace. How many homes, once peaceful and happy, have been blighted by its withering curse. How often is the quiet of a community disturbed by the carousals of a drunken rabble. How often has the once quiet and composed conscience been thrown into a fever of excitement and confusion.

Intemperance is a robber. It robs its victim of health, stability of nerves, moral power, good name, and of a good influence. It has robbed many a clerk of his position, many a physician of his practice, and many a lawyer of his clients. It has robbed many a man of a fine residence or farm. Like a highway robber, it waylays the poor laborer on his homeway and steals his hard-earned wages. It breaks into the family circles and robs the wife of the love, sympathy and support of her husband. It fills her life with wretchedness, misery and ceaseless drudgery. It blunts her fine sensibilities and forecasts her path to the very grave with the darkest gloom. In her forlorn and hopeless condition she thinks what she *is*, and what she *might* have been, if she at one time had said *no*. All the pleasures which were once sacred, dear and sweet, are now stolen away by the intemperance of her husband.

The children are robbed of an affectionate father. Once that father's heart was loving

and sympathetic, now it is cold, callous and cruel. There is now no music in his name. His very footfalls startle them. Instead of kind words, they receive only harsh words and cruel treatment. Intemperance has given them squallor for cleanliness, frowns for smiles, and terror and fear for love and confidence.

Intemperance is a murderer. Murder and treason are regarded as the highest forms of civil crime. Statistics prove that more men die from intemperance than any other cause of mortality. Its victims far exceed that of war or any pestilence. It is estimated that intemperance slays annually in this country one hundred thousand human beings. Think how many fathers and sons are thus yearly slain. Recall the names of those who have fallen in your own neighborhood through strong drink. I can recall the names of scores who have thus been slain by this demon. Yes, intemperance is a crime, a great crime; and it should be treated as such.

“Grandpa,” asks Walter, “how much money is expended annually in our country for intoxicating drinks?”

About nine hundred million dollars. This is a large sum which you cannot comprehend very easily, so I will put it in comparison with the amounts we spend for other objects. The annual expenditures in the United States, based on the census of 1880 and other reliable authorities, are as follows :

Home and Foreign Missions,.....	\$ 5,500,000
Public Education,.....	85,000,000
Boots and Shoes,.....	196,000,000
Cotton Goods,.....	210,000,000
Woolen Goods,.....	237,000,000
Meat,.....	303,000,000
Bread,.....	505,000,000
Tobacco,.....	600,000,000
Liquor,.....	900,000,000

What a sad contrast is this in our expenses. For every one dollar that is spent for missions, \$109 are spent for tobacco and \$163 are spent for liquors. There is as much money expended for tobacco and strong drink as is expended altogether for missions, education, boots and shoes, cotton

and woolen goods, meat and bread. In computing the expenditures for liquors we should add \$1,000,000,000 which it costs this country annually to take care of the 800,000 paupers, the 315,000 criminals and the 30,000 idiots occasioned by intemperance.

“Grandpa, is intemperance on the increase or decline?” asks Charity.

Notwithstanding laws have been enacted to restrict the manufacture and sale of strong drink, intemperance seems to be on the increase. The average consumption of strong drink in 1840 was 4 gallons to a person, in 1850 it was 4.08 gallons, in 1860 it was 6.43 gallons, in 1870 it was 7.69 gallons, in 1880 it was 10.08 gallons, and in 1890 it was 15.51 gallons. This rapid increase of intemperance indicates how inefficient the liquor license law is. At first we had the common license, and intemperance increased under that. Then we introduced high license, and intemperance made more rapid progress. The experience of

the past proves that license in any form cannot stem the tide of intemperance.

“Grandpa,” asks David, “how many saloons are there in the United States?”

Four years ago there were about 200,000, now there are about 250,000; an increase of 50,000 within four years. Let us make a little calculation. If we allow twenty feet front to each saloon and place them adjoining to one another on the opposite sides of the same street, it would give us a street of saloons just 473 miles long. Nor is the rum-seller satisfied with his 250,000 grogeries in this country. He takes his deadly drugs to heathen lands and deals them out to the unsuspecting with fatal results. It is stated upon good authority that where one missionary is sent to the foreign field, 70,000 gallons of rum are sent there. And for every convert to Christianity, 100 are made drunkards principally through imported rum. How appalling are these figures.

“How can this great evil be removed?” exclaimed Charity.

Experience has proven that it cannot be suppressed either by the common or the high license law. License in itself is wrong as it legalizes intemperance, which according to Webster is crime in a three-fold sense. It would be no less wrong to legalize theft or murder. License is at best a compromise of temperance with intemperance. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" 2 Cor. 6: 14. I can see but one safe policy to be pursued in the suppression of this great evil: total abstinence on the part of the individual, and total prohibition by law of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating drinks. All boys and girls, men and women are solemnly enjoined to let strong drink alone, lest at last it bite like a serpent and sting like an adder. The motto of Fort Temperance is, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." Col. 2: 21. Daniel and his three companions practiced abstinence when they desired "pulse to eat, and water to drink." Dan.

1 : 12. When the Rechabites were asked to drink wine, they said, " We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever." Jer. 35 : 6.

Intemperance is a high crime against God and man, and it should be treated as any other crime. It should be strictly prohibited by law under penalty commensurate to its own criminality. The temperance question has become a great issue of our time. The people are rapidly taking sides. The line of demarcation is being more clearly defined. On the side of temperance are arrayed the Sons of Temperance, the Good Templars, the Templars of Honor, the Women's Christian Temperance Union. These are all strong associations, and consist of intelligent and influential persons. To this list is to be added the controlling element in 300,000 churches and Sunday schools. Here, too, we find the mothers and sisters who have at heart the welfare of their sons and brothers.

On the other side are arrayed a long line of groggeries, saloons and hotels ; the liquor manufacturers and dealers ; drunkards, thieves and murderers ; night revellers and corrupt politicians, and men who for gain would take the last penny from the drunkard and his suffering family. It cannot be denied that temperance and intemperance are represented by these two sides. Now, children, on which side would you like to be ?

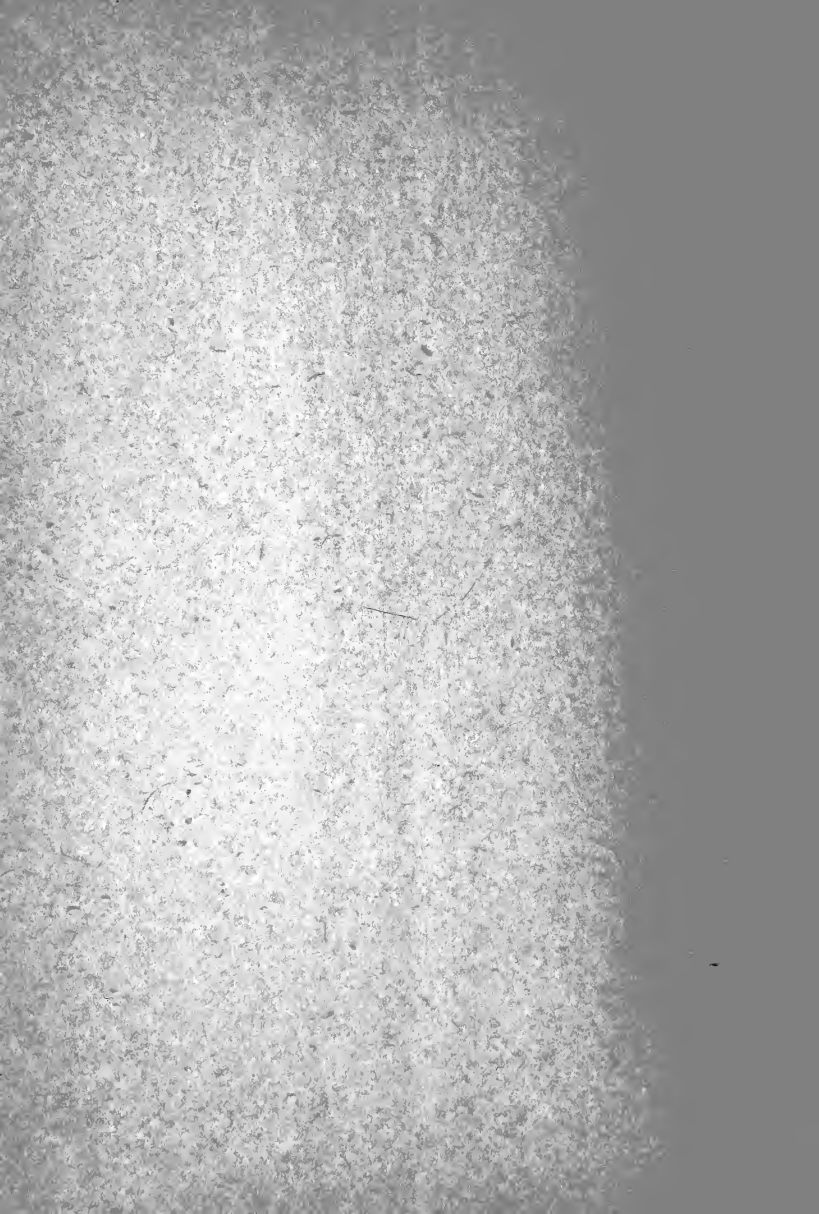
“ On the side of temperance ! on the side of total abstinence ! on the side of prohibition ! ” they all exclaim.

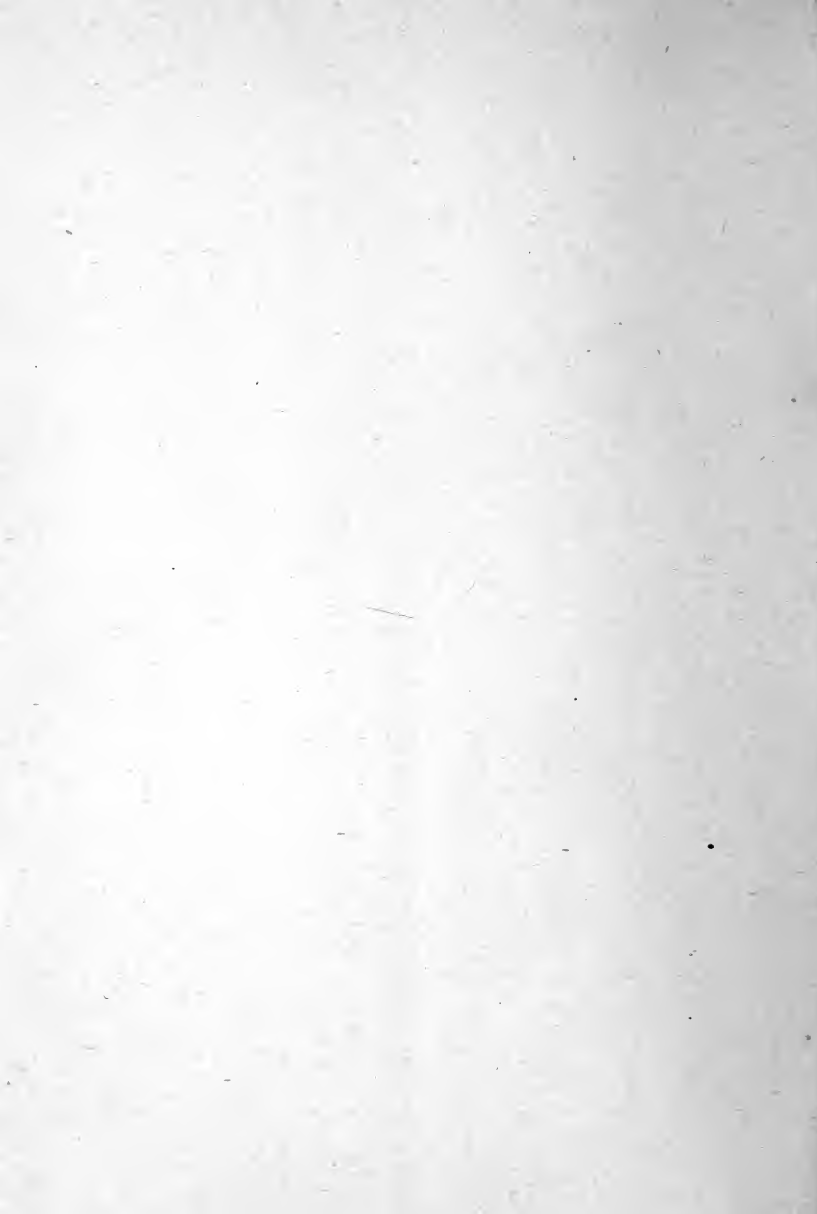
I hope you will always be on the side of temperance and be good temperance workers.

Now, children, this brings our interesting conference of nine evenings to a close. Do not forget the topics of our conversation, or the instruction that has been imparted. Remember that Christ has His line of strongholds. These are the great principles of His kingdom. He wants us

all as soldiers to be true and faithful to our sacred trust, knowing that we war a spiritual warfare in this life. And then when our service is ended in the cause of our blessed Master and the strife is over, may we all be able to say with Paul : “I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.” 2 Tim. 4 : 7, 8.

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